

Tuesday December 3 1996

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 48,726

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with European weather



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Britain's best schools

Top schools



Just 22 years of planning, 12 years of building work and £511m later, the first book goes on to the shelves of the British Library. (Entry for the public follows in 12 months time — approx.)

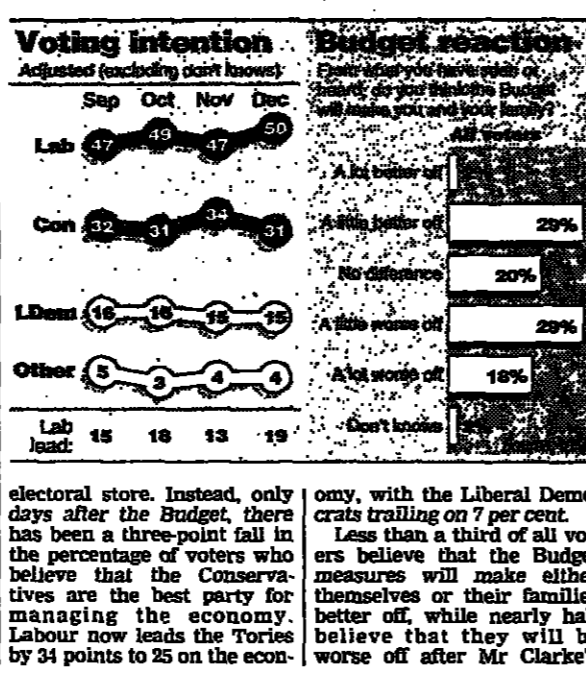
John Ezard on yesterday's opening of the final chapter of a great British saga. Page 3

Budget fails to boost Tories

Labour sweeps to 19 point poll lead

With five months to go before the general election, Labour has opened up a 19-point lead over the Conservatives on the back of a 3 per cent swing in a single month. The adjusted December poll shows Labour on 60 per cent (up 3 per cent compared with November), Conservatives 31 (down 3), Liberal Democrats 15 (no change) and others 4 (no change). Labour's lead has jumped by six points since November.

All this would be bad enough for the Conservatives, especially so close to a general election, but it is compounded by a series of disastrously negative poll findings on a Budget by which the Government had set great



electoral store. Instead, only days after the Budget, there has been a three-point fall in the percentage of voters who believe that the Conservatives are the best party for managing the economy. Labour now leads the Tories by 34 points to 25 on the economy. And only a quarter of voters believe that the spending measures announced a week ago will improve public services, while more than half believe they will make them worse.

Asked how they thought the Budget would affect their own families, only 2 per cent of voters believed that they would be a lot better off, with 29 per cent saying they would be a little better off. By contrast, 18 per cent thought they would be a lot worse off and 29 per cent thought they would be a little worse off. Twenty per cent thought it would make no difference.

Only 4 per cent thought that the Budget would improve the public services a lot, with 21 per cent saying they would be improved a little. But 27 per cent thought that services would be made a lot worse and a further 28 per cent thought they would be a little worse. Only 15 per cent thought the measures would make no difference.

The Tories' difficulties are underlined by the findings for voters who supported them in 1992 but who now intend to vote for some other party. Only 33 per cent of these crucial "swing voters" think they and their families will be better off after the Budget, while 40 per cent think they will be worse off.

Current Conservative voters are the only group in which a majority believe that the Budget will leave them better off. Tories divide 48-21 in favour of the measures, Labour voters divide 65-30 against them and Liberal Democrat voters give them the thumbs-down by 87-25.

There is some good news for the Conservatives. The Tories remain the party most voters think will keep taxes low, 47 per cent of voters chose the Conservatives, compared with 36 per cent who chose Labour. Seventeen per cent were don't knows. Among former Tory voters, the Conservatives' advantage is even more pronounced, with 61 per cent of this group selecting the Tories and only 21 per cent choosing Labour. Current Tory voters divide 89-5 in favour of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrat voters choose the Tories by 53-31. Labour voters divide in Labour's favour by 63-22.

Labour's lead in the December poll and its 60 per cent adjusted rating are its best since April and reverse a swing to the Conservatives after John Major's effective party conference performances. The Tories' 31 per cent rating is back at its pre-conference level.

The swing to Labour is particularly strong among men, where Labour's lead has jumped 9 points since November to stand at 24 per cent. The gap among women has increased by 3 points to 16. Labour's post-Budget surge is confirmed in the latest unadjusted poll findings. These show Labour on 63 per cent (up 5 points compared with November), Conservatives 27 (down 6), Liberal Democrats 16 (up 1) and others 4 (no change). Labour's unadjusted poll lead this month is 26 points, up 11 points on November.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,200 adults aged 18 and over by telephone between November 29 and December 1. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.

Road rage victim stabbed to death

DRIVER fled to death in front of his girlfriend after being stabbed in the face, neck and body in a frenzied attack of road rage. Apparently by a passenger in a car he overtook.

West Mercia police are hunting for the attacker who killed Lee Harvey, aged 25, and injured his girlfriend Tracee Andrews, aged 27, in a sustained knife attack on a lonely country road on Sunday night.

"As far as we are concerned it is a murder," said Carl Baldacchino, spokesman for West Mercia police. "It seems to have arisen out of a motoring incident — a normal overtaking manoeuvre. There is no suggestion that they had known or met the occupants of the other car before."

The couple, who lived together in the village of Avechurch and each had a young daughter by their previous partner, had gone out for a drink with friends at a quiet country pub called the Marlbrook, near Bromsgrove.

As they drove home on the A38, they overtook a dark F-registration Ford Sierra hatchback in poor condition, near junction 1 of the M42. Police said they did not know what Mr Harvey had done to anger the other motorist.

"The only witness was Tracee. She was leaning down taking a tape out of the glove compartment. She was only aware of the car swerving."

The couple crossed the motorway and turned left on to the small roads and lanes that would lead them back to Avechurch, with the car following them. It pursued them for three miles, close to their rear bumper, with headlights flashing. "Gestures were exchanged," said Mr Baldacchino.

The Sierra is believed to have overtaken Mr Harvey and Ms Andrews in their white G-registered Ford Escort and the two cars came to a stop. Mr Harvey and the driver of the other car got out. "There were verbal exchanges and there might have been a bit of a push," said Mr Baldacchino. The other driver got back into his car.

Then the Escort passenger, a fat man, got out and approached Mr Harvey and stabbed him. It was a sustained attack taking place over several minutes. He was stabbed at least 15 times in the face, neck and body. The attack continued as he fell to the ground. His girlfriend tried to intervene and she was struck and cut and punched to the ground as well. She required a few stitches just above her eye.

The cars had stopped outside an isolated house. Those inside heard nothing, but one of them happened to be leaving just after the incident, and saw Ms Andrews on the road cradling her boyfriend in her arms. They called the police.

Det Supt Ian Johnston, in charge of the investigation, said: "We are treating this as murder, a murder that stems from a road-rage-type incident. This was a vicious crime, one of the most vicious I've seen in 30 years."

The attacker is described as white, aged 25-35, about 5ft 9in to 6ft tall and very overweight. He was wearing a high-length, donkey-type jacket and would have been very heavily bloodstained, said police. The driver of the car was white, 18-19 years old, slim with very short dark hair.

Low bridge ahead for rail freight plan

PLANNED switch of freight from road to rail would require 150 bridges over the English Channel and Glasgow to be raised by up to six inches.

An alternative for some bridges, says a consortium involving Eurotunnel, P&O and Railtrack, would be to lower the track, which could be more expensive.

The Piggback Consortium, so-called because heavy trailers would be loaded on to low-slung wagons, believes its plan could mean 400,000 such trailers carried on the rail-ways each year by 2003.

Nail Kinnoch, the European Transport Commissioner, who attended the unveiling ceremony at London's St Pancras station, believes the plan could spur a huge switch to rail freight.

Raising a bridge is not a costly exercise, but requires careful work. Railtrack, which would be in charge of the operation, said that arch bridges would require most attention.

The first tests have been completed, and an evaluation has been carried out by Railtrack. Its predecessor, British Rail, snuffed at the idea, which has taken three years to reach this stage.

The system would be the first lift-on, lift-off piggyback service using low-slung wagons between Glasgow and the south coast, with feeder routes from Liverpool, Manchester and Irish ports. It would allow the transportation of lorry trailers without their drivers or cabs.

But there is a snag: not even the members of the consortium can agree on the likely cost.

The Piggback chairman, Lord Berkeley, put the figure at £100 million. Railtrack said £210 million.

Lord Berkeley is threatening to take the matter to the rail regulator, John Swift.

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Britain

A couple who wed after meeting in a mental hospital tried to kill a taxi driver during their honeymoon, a court was told yesterday.

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Big increases in house prices last month sparked fears that Kenneth Clarke could raise interest rates next week to brake the recovery.

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To our readers,

Over recent weeks, we have been experiencing production problems which have seriously affected our distribution in some countries.

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Sketch

Keep a welcome in the suburbs



Simon Hoggart

THERE are only six Tory MPs in Wales, of whom three are ministers, two are ex-ministers, and one has a majority of 15 fewer than the total number of Welsh Labour MPs.

Or Lady Olga Matland (Sutton and Chesham), who by a strange coincidence also asked about the foreign investment pouring into Wales.

Hugh Dykes of Harrow East joined forces with Robert Hughes of Harrow West to ask Mr Hague about Labour's proposed Welsh assembly and the disasters it will wreak upon the people of Wales.

Daydd Wigley (PC, Caernarfon) was furious and complained that all these planted questions, from Tories who hardly know where Wales is, and who raised only two brown-mosing topics, had stopped real Welsh MPs asking real Welsh questions.

Mr Wigley was infuriated and continued raving long after he'd been told to sit down. And the Deputy Speaker's figure was wrong: only 13 opposition MPs had obliged.

Crowd of 70,000 defies Belgrade police as international condemnation puts president on defensive

Serb leader starts retreat

Protest will go on, vow people

Julian Barger in Belgrade and Ian Black in Lisbon

THE Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, was forced on to the retreat at home and abroad yesterday as 70,000 demonstrators marched through Belgrade, defying a threatened police crackdown, and foreign leaders attacked his government for annulling opposition wins in local elections.

A milling procession of opposition supporters walked through Belgrade in heavy snow waving at policemen and presenting them with flowers. The police, who on Sunday said they would no longer stand by and watch "violent and illegal" protests, said they had arrested only 23 people for causing damage or disruption.

The opposition vowed to maintain its campaign until the government acknowledged election victories in 15 cities last month.

Vuk Draskovic, of the Serbian renewal movement, said that protesters would not respond to police force with violence of their own.

"If Milosevic is getting ready to create a tragedy, we will not reply. We will meet any violent provocation with songs and sit-ins."

Serbia also came under fire at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe summit in Lisbon yesterday where Carl Bildt, the high representative for Bosnia, issued a strongly-worded statement on the "major and serious crisis" which he said could threaten regional stability — a warning which will resonate on the eve of tomorrow's London conference on prospects for peace.

The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, and the United States vice-president, Al Gore, called for Serbia to respect democracy.

In an apparent government climbdown yesterday the scheduled convening of the Serbian parliament and a disputed local election in the second city of Nis were postponed after the opposition threatened to make them the focus of protest actions.



Students offer flowers to Belgrade police as protesters continue to call for the resignation of the Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic

As they have done every evening for two weeks, marchers gathered last night outside the offices of the Zajedno (Together) coalition in central Belgrade. They fired flares into the falling snow, turning the sky pink.

A vitriolic government attack on Sunday appeared to have backfired. Dragan Tomic, the parliamentary speaker and a senior Socialist official, had appeared on television vilifying the demonstrators as "fascists" and comparing Zajedno's tactics to Hitler's.

EU ministers are edging towards an emphatic No to the euro, which sceptics believe would be a vote-winner.

Government whips and some cabinet sceptics dismissed the new campaign as media-inspired, but Conservative Central Office — identified by the Daily Telegraph as backing a switch on Europe — was uncharacteristically silent.

Most cabinet ministers, a mixture of rightwingers and pragmatists, are said to back change, with even Michael Heseltine, an ardent European, allegedly "persuadable".

The only problem is that the formidable Mr Clarke would almost certainly resign rather than accept another messy retreat which he believes to be against both national and party interest.

Ahead of an election, that would wreak havoc among moderate Tory voters.

Even a last-minute switch

to pour scorn on Mr Tomic's remarks and to turn them to their advantage. Looking down on the crowd from the fourth-floor of the Zajedno headquarters, Mr Draskovic said: "[Tomic] called the citizens of Belgrade fascists ... He spat on our past ... the biggest insult in our history."

Even normally compliant officials in Montenegro (which with Serbia constitutes federal Yugoslavia) were yesterday distancing themselves from Mr Milosevic's government. The Mont-

negrin parliamentary speaker, Zvezdcar Marovic, said yesterday: "No one has the right to change the will of people regardless of whether it is done by the authority or the opposition."

He took the opportunity to send a warning to Mr Milosevic over his reported ambitions to graduate from the Serbian to the Yugoslav presidency. Such a move, Mr Marovic said, "is seen by some as the only solution but by others as the embodiment of too much power concentrated in the hands of one person."

Review

A good deal too soft on the inside

Lyn Gardner

Inside Trading

Norwich Playhouse

MALCOLM Bradbury has professed himself disenchanted with writing for television, hence his first stage play for 30 years. He is clearly more than a mite disenchanted with the City, too. But aren't we all?

White's and pass the buck along with the port.

Bradbury spins some agreeable jokes about the City, and pokes gentle fun at institutions such as Barings, run like Victorian gentlemen's clubs, where greed is disguised by good manners and breeding valued more than competence.

But while Bradbury's central idea of a scam — to get bank and government to join in partnership to build a city of the future to celebrate the millennium — is a potent one, the satire is over-tempered with kindness.

Inside Trading is an old-fashioned comedy of manners which throws the odd nod in the direction of farce but missed in Berlin during the summer of 1933 shortly after Hitler was appointed Chancellor, was set against the background of a society ravaged by economic depression.

Clarke warns Major over Europe

Policy change on euro sought by sceptics 'quite preposterous'

John Palmer in Brussels and Michael White

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, last night issued a veiled threat to resign from the Cabinet if John Major buckles to renewed pressure from Tory Euro-sceptics to rule out membership of the proposed European single currency for the lifetime of the next parliament.

"The Prime Minister and I were on a public platform together at the Tory party conference about six weeks ago actually uniting our party around a sensible policy which we made clear we thought was in the national interests," Mr Clarke declared in Brussels, as rumour of a fresh anti-European putsch resurfaced in the Commons.

To underpin his assertion that it would be "quite preposterous" to reverse the cabinet's policy of keeping options open, Mr Clarke emerged from yesterday's

meeting of EU finance ministers with the "copper-bottomed assurances" that Britain would not be disciplined — or even fined — under the so-called stability pact underpinning single currency membership.

"I said I would get copper-bottomed wording in order to make it clear what in my opinion was always the case, that these EMU regulations did not apply to the UK," Mr Clarke said. "I got it this morning. I have to say without any particular difficulty."

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in the Tory manifesto, hinted at last night to outflank Labour might trigger his departure, despite the inevitable charges of treachery.

"The idea of changing [the policy] is quite preposterous in my view," Mr Clarke said in Brussels. "It would be no way to fight an election nor to put out yourself to the country as a governing party at all." Asked if he might resign he said: "I think our policy is quite clear and overwhelmingly in Britain's interests."

"We should exercise our choice whether or not we wish to join the single currency when we discover whether the single currency is going ahead, and when we discover who is going to join it, and when we discover what the detailed terms are," said Mr Clarke, who appeared confident that his deal with Mr Major would stick.

Other EU governments are both amused and amazed that so many Tory Euro-sceptics could have seriously supposed Britain would be bound by the EMU project rules.

Found breaks mark history Notebook, page 11

Doctor over the moon as he is cleared of misconduct after flu scam that left footballers sick as parrots and out of the cup

Viviek Chaudhary

A FOOTBALL club doctor who admitted signing false sick notes for eight players to get a crucial cup game postponed avoided the red card yesterday when he was cleared of a charge of serious professional misconduct.

Mohammed Mirqut, aged 57, of Lanarkshire, signed the sick notes for players of the semi-professional Shots Bon Accord junior football club, without ex-

amining them, stating that they had flu, the General Medical Council (GMC) heard yesterday.

The GMC was told that two of the players were out of the country when Dr Mirqut signed the sick notes but that he had no idea that the flu epidemic was being staged.

Shots Bon Accord, one of the Central League's top teams, were reigning cup champions who had been drawn against lowly Thornwood on Hogganay two years ago.

The club was said to have been worried about losing the tie and handed in the eight sick notes to the Scottish Junior Football Association (SJFA) causing the tie to be postponed.

The GMC was told by Barrie Richards, Dr Mirqut's counsel, that he is not a football fan and that his professional services were called on infrequently by the club.

Ms Richards said the doctor admitted that his conduct might have fallen short of that expected of a practitioner but it was not so serious as to amount to serious professional misconduct.

"There is no evidence that he knew anything was being staged and there was also no evidence that he had received money."

The GMC was told that Dr Mirqut signed the notes when there was a flu epidemic in Lanarkshire and that some of the players involved were "damaged Hares" who said they had flu.

The committee cleared him but, while Dr Mirqut was celebrating yesterday's result, Shots Bon Accord are still paying the price for the flu fixing scandal. The club were fined £500 by the SJFA and thrown out of the cup.

They later had the cup ban lifted and won back the £500, but the SJFA banned them from all football for a year.

When they resumed playing, they were forced to move down to the Central League's second division, which they currently lead.

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صوتنا من الامم

Lords defeat vetting plan in Police Bill

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

A SUCCESSFUL all-party revolt in the House of Lords last night struck down plans by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to charge for official vetting on the criminal backgrounds of millions of voluntary charity workers.

The 137-135 vote rebellion was led by the former House of Commons Speaker, Lord Weatherill, and came during the committee stage of the Police Bill. Labour and Liberal Democrat peers, backed by two bishops, voiced the complaints of charities including the Scouts, the British Red Cross, St John Ambulance, the National Society for Child Welfare and many other child welfare organisations that charges would have a devastating impact on the voluntary movement.

The defeat came on a key section of the legislation setting up a self-financing Criminal Records Agency and was the first the Government has suffered in the new parliamentary session. John Major's rapidly shrinking Commons majority will make it difficult to overturn.

The Lords voted to exempt those who volunteer for registered charities from paying the £8-to-£10 fee to be charged for the proposed "enhanced criminal record certificate". This will be issued to those who want to work unsupervised with children and will list not only their past convictions but also cautions, charges and any other information from local police files.

The Women's Royal Voluntary Service has estimated that it would cost £1.25 million to carry out checks on its existing 125,000 volunteers and a further £100,000 a year for new recruits.

The decision to extend criminal record checks to charity workers follows a recommendation by Lord Cullen's inquiry into the Dunblane massacre to ensure

greater vetting of those who work with children.

However, Mr Howard's decision to make individual volunteers or charities pay contracts Lord Cullen's report, which says it is "very important that charges are kept within the limits of what organisations can afford". He said that if necessary the Government should subsidise them.

The Home Office Minister, Lady Blatch, said last night it was officially estimated that the £40 million to £200 million cost of the checks on up to 20 million volunteers would fall on the taxpayer or other job seekers if the charity exemption was allowed to stand.

"The vast majority of volunteers will be happy to pay this modest fee. Free checks for volunteers would double the cost of certificates for the others who would have to pay, some of whom are unemployed," said Lady Blatch.

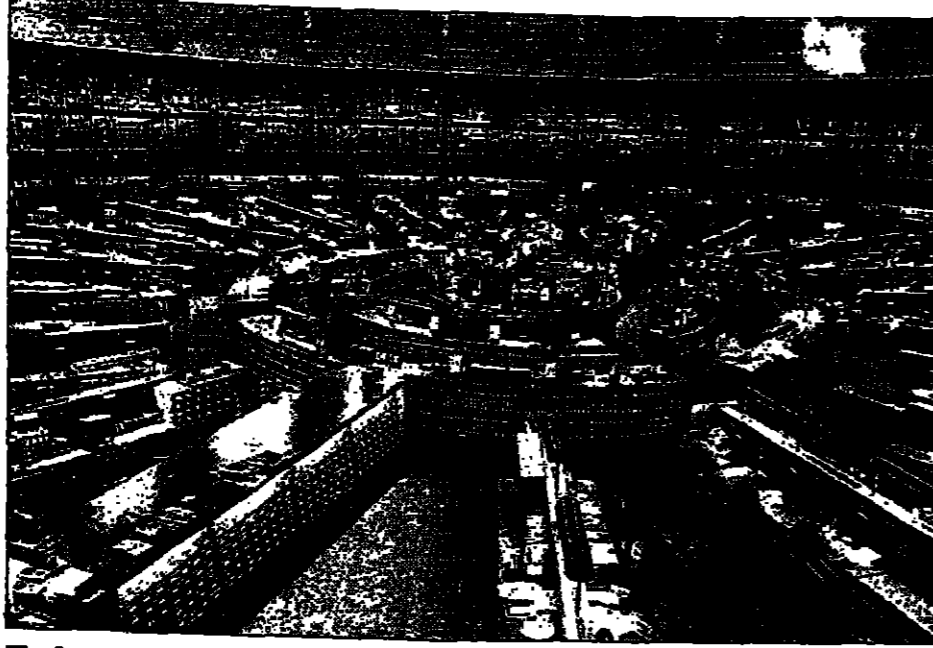
But Lord Weatherill, backed by several Tory peers, Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Bishops of Coventry and Lincoln, said the charges would place an intolerable financial burden on charities which depended on volunteers.

"It is accepted good practice that volunteers should not be out of pocket by volunteering," said Lord Weatherill, who argued that the charges would undermine the Government's attempts to encourage the voluntary movement.

There would be intense pressure on charities from insurers and trustees to make the voluntary checks mandatory to ensure they were not left open to accusations that they had not taken all possible steps to protect the children or vulnerable people in their care.

A Home Office spokeswoman said last night that ministers would consider the impact of the amendment. The House of Lords will next consider the Police Bill in January.

Hugo Young, page 9



The famous domed British Museum reading room at Bloomsbury (left), and the new British Library building at St Pancras

PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANK MARTIN (left) and ALAN REVELL

£511 m library gets a book at last

John Ezard on a welcome new passage in a 44-year saga of delays and increasing costs

IT TOOK 44 years and £511 million to get the first little book three-quarters of a mile from the British Museum to its new home in Euston Road, central London, yesterday.

At 9.55am the first of 5,600 van journeys drove it, sealed like other books in bubble-wrap, to an unloading bay. There staff brought its pallet by lift to the basement, where librarians took over.

They unpacked it, working to a computer-generated plan. Then — ceremonially and with some reverence — the chief executive, Dr Brian Lang, put it in its place.

The book preserves a medieval folk song which asks: *What's the life of a man, any more than a leaf? For a man has a season and why should he grieve?*

This lyric of mutability now lives in a computer-maintained temperature of 16C, with 60 degrees of humidity — conditions theoretically calculated to preserve its pages for ever, as a good library should try to do.

And so the Oxford Book of English Traditional Verse became the first volume to go on the shelves of the British Library: a small, inaugural moment of British success in a project which has so far had

the image of a mega-British failure.

Although the book is out of print, it is not rare. The cost of preparing the ungainly site at St Pancras to receive it was beyond the price of rubles. But the British Library had begun to do its job.

Finishing the job — the biggest book move in history — will take a daily staff of 40 the equivalent of three working lifetimes. Their task of shifting 12 million items in 600,000 crates is due to last until 1999, the year the building fully opens.

The first readers are planned to arrive at the end of 1997. Observers view this forecast, like so many others from the library, as possibly optimistic.

"It's a complex process — not like stacking the shelves of a supermarket," Dr Lang said.

The library's cargo, including Magna Carta, the Gutenberg Bible and Shakespeare's First Folio, will travel to 200 miles of white metal shelving by unmarked van to discourage ambush attempts. The most sizeable treasure is the six-foot Klencke Atlas, the smallest a thumb-sized New Testament.

Oxford's folk songs anthology was in a first batch of 2,500 British, European and

Canadian works. On hand to greet it was a batch of delectably upbeat literature — including the crime novelist P. D. James.

"The library will be a temple to books, a great centre for learning and creativity and sheer reading pleasure," she said.

"After long delays and all sorts of difficulties and controversies we are here very happily to see the books put on the shelves."

Harold Pinter, gazing at the pile about which Prince Charles asked "How can you tell it's a library?" said: "It is a very elegant building and I look forward to seeing thousands of people using it."

The historian Lady Antonia Fraser, his wife, said: "This is a very exciting and significant step. I shall hope to be one of the first to come and work here."

Dr Lang called it a flagship. "The problems are behind us now," he said.

Visitors yesterday noticed a soundproof, glassed-off section in the rare books reading room.

It was designed decades ago to mute the din of a typing pool, in the era before planners foresaw quiet computer keyboards.

If Dr Lang's confidence about the future is vindicated, the section will stand as a memorial to the library's old planning disasters, just as the installation of the Oxford book is meant as a symbol of its determination to succeed now.

Chapter and verse

● Controversy first surfaced in 1952 over a former County of London plan to extend the British Museum's library facilities to nearby Bloomsbury Square. A decade on, the row heats up amid claims that 1,000 Londoners will be forced to abandon their homes.

● By the late 1960s the Bloomsbury Square plan is shelved as the Government considers other sites.

● A new decade and a not-so-new plan — a new British Library to be built on the seven-acre Bloomsbury Square site within 13 years for £36 million, architect Colin St John Wilson.

● The first hint that delay will be inextricably linked with the project comes in 1973 as councils repeat objections to the Bloomsbury site and the cost, treble the original estimate, threatens the scheme.

● A year on the Government concedes defeat and selects a larger site between Euston and St Pancras stations. Work is due to



Colin St John Wilson: asked to design library in 1970s

start in 1979 with a completion date of 1990 and a total cost of £164 million.

● By 1979 estimated costs spiral above £200 million; leading academics question the wisdom of the scheme.

● In 1982 construction begins on Britain's largest civic building, with plans for the time for 350 miles of shelving and space for 20 million books. By the late 1980s the design is under fire for being too modern,

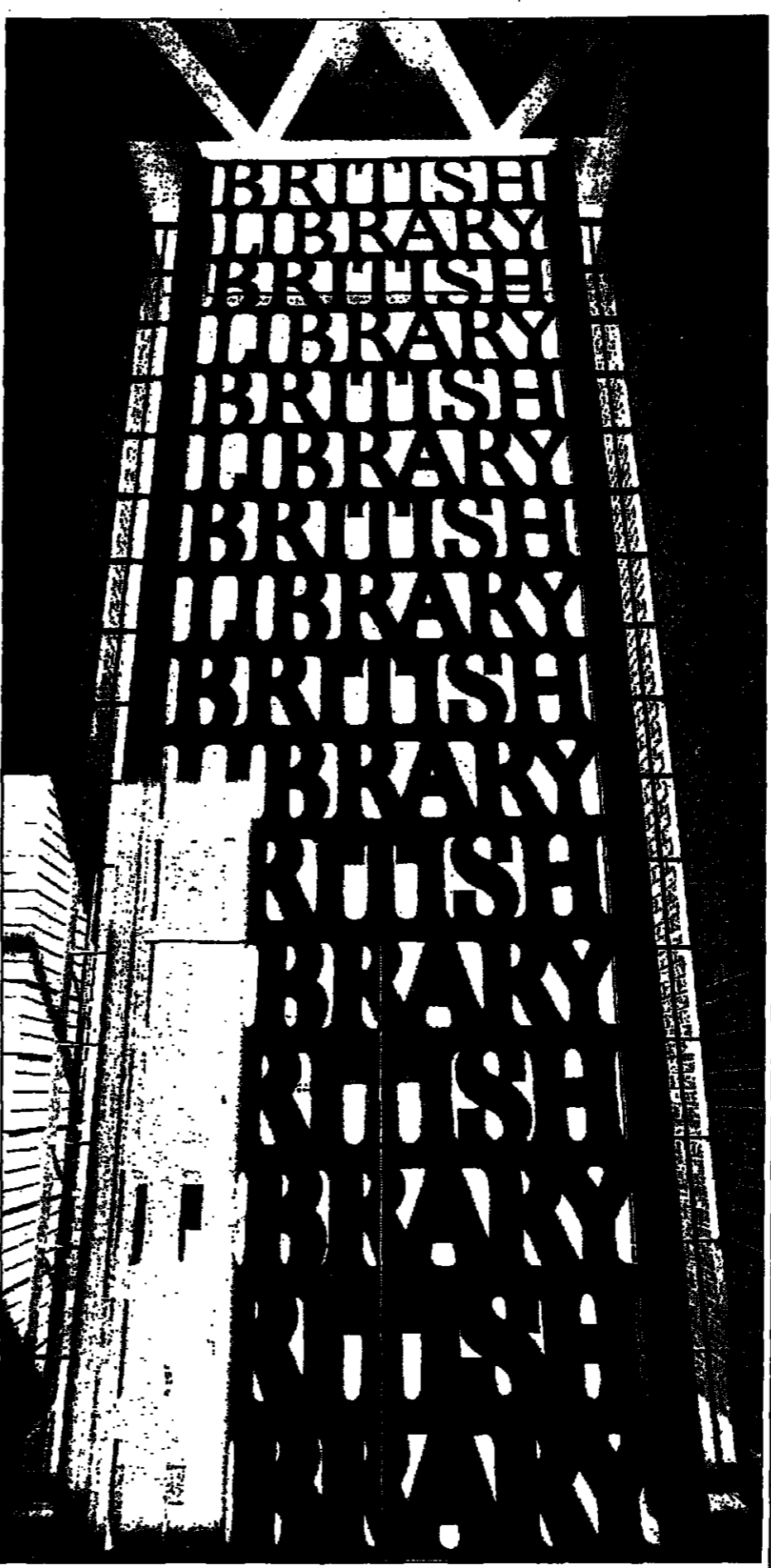
too concrete, too box-like and basically too hideous.

● Amid criticism by the National Audit Commission of the Government's handling of the project, the taxpayer is forced to fork out a further £150 million in 1990, bringing the total to £450 million.

● In 1991 the provisional 1998 opening is set back a year; mechanical shelving is spewing books on to the floor, ceilings are too low and wiring is faulty.

● Another year, another Government inquiry slates the new £50 million cost. The completion date creeps forward from 1996 to 1997.

● Yesterday, as British Library chief executive Brian Lang proclaims problems are a thing of the past, the first two crates of books arrive, 5,000 literary works from the British Museum shelves. With the humanities reading room set to be opened by the Queen next November, the last crate of books will be unloaded in 1999 — if all goes to plan.



The first readers are due to enter the library late next year

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Explorers to keep Shell cash despite environment fears

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

FELLOWS of the Royal Geographical Society voted last night to keep Shell sponsorship, despite a protest by 1,500 members over the company's activities in Nigeria.

The 73 per cent vote ends months of wrangling after a 200-10 vote at the annual conference in January to end the relationship with Shell.

Earl Jellicoe, president of the society, appealed to members to keep the £45,000-a-year sponsorship, fearing other industrial backers would take fright and withdraw a total of £160,000, leaving the society strapped for cash.

Corporate sponsors enabled the society to influence company environment policies and social awareness. In any case, "a full independent substantiated case" had not been made against Shell, he said.

The society's ruling council has set up an ethical committee, chaired by Sir Crispin Tickell, to monitor the activities of corporate sponsors.

Josephine Longberg, one of the fellows at last night's meeting, said: "I came to vote to get rid of Shell but was persuaded that it is better to keep an eye

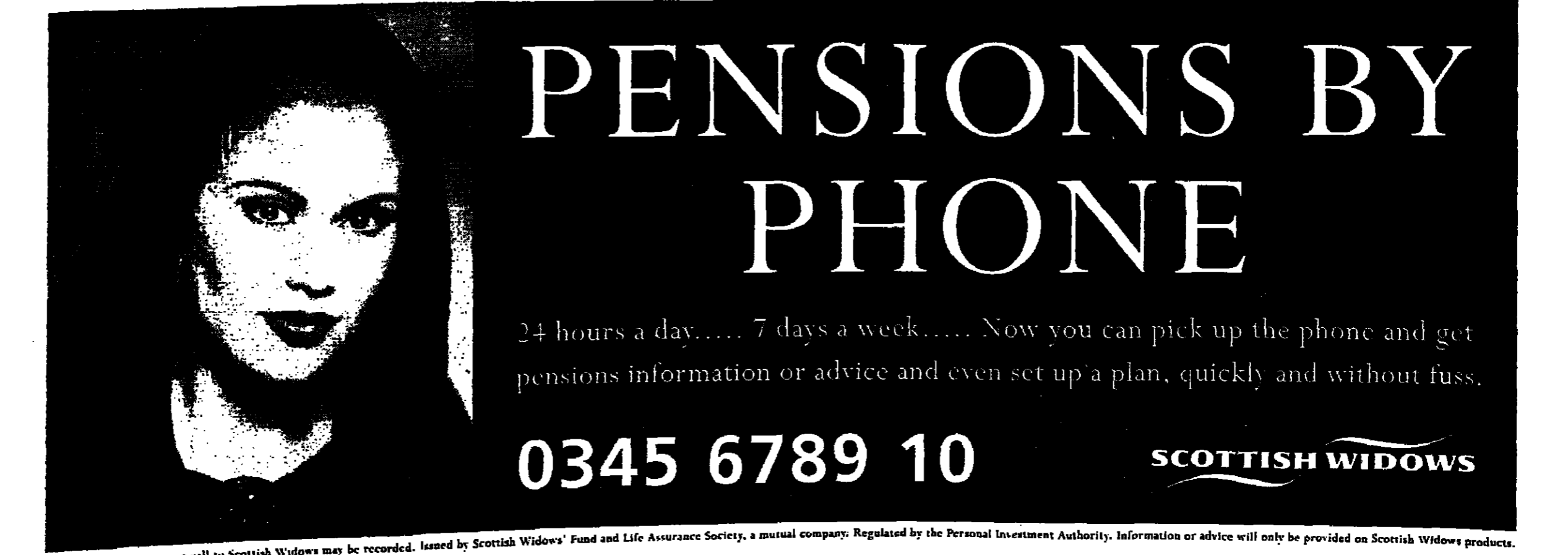
on them and influence their future behaviour."

The society had organised the vote at its London headquarters after the membership forced a special general meeting. About 500 attended last night's meeting with most of the votes coming by post.

The society, still the home of Britain's explorers, used the Shell money to finance expeditions. Last January feelings were running high at the annual meeting when the organisation had just amalgamated with the Institute of British Geographers.

In order to deflect criticism, the council organised a day-long debate at Easter but this failed to defuse the row, and younger fellows forced the special general meeting.

In a message to members before the vote they said: "Allowing Shell to continue as a sponsor would convey the impression that the kind of environmental despoliation experienced in Ogoni is accepted corporate behaviour. Shell's reputation has been so severely damaged both in the Third World and among environmental groups globally that Shell's continued association with the RGS-IBG seriously threatens the academic integrity of fellows."



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32 have hospital check in disease alert

Geoffrey Gibbs on latest moves in the Cardiff university meningitis outbreak

THIRTY-TWO more students showing possible signs of meningitis were admitted to hospital for observation in Cardiff yesterday as the names were released of the two 19-year-old students at the University of Wales who have died from the disease.

They were Ann-Marie O'Connor, a first-year law student from Acton, west London, and Samantha Milroy from Stockport, Cheshire, who was in the first year of a pharmacy course.

Of three other students being treated for meningitis, two are recovering and the

third is critical in intensive care. Health officials stressed last night that no further cases of the disease had been confirmed. Eight of those admitted to hospital as a precautionary measure were about to be discharged. In the Commons, the Welsh Secretary, William Hague, said it could take several weeks before a full investigation into the outbreak was complete. Meanwhile, he was confident health and university authorities were doing everything possible to prevent further spread of the infection.



Heidi Mann, who was visiting her student sister, gets an injection at one of the halls of residence

He told MPs that the Welsh Office's chief medical officer had visited the campus to assess the situation. "Contrary to some press reports, she indicates that the atmosphere, though tense and understandably sober, does not demonstrate any panic. The students are behaving very responsibly," he said. The outbreak is centred on the University Hall residential building about four miles from the main campus. Around 90 per cent of the 770 students living at the hall have now been vaccinated and a programme has been extended to include guests who spend one or more nights

at the hall in the past two weeks. Worried students besieged information assistants from the National Meningitis Trust outside the university's students' union building in the centre of Cardiff yesterday. Louise Thomas, one of four volunteers manning the trust's mobile vehicle, said that there had been a constant stream of young people seeking advice about how the disease was passed on and whether they should be vaccinated. By yesterday evening, students had taken more than 2,400 leaflets giving advice about the disease.

After stopping at the van to pick up an information leaflet, Gabriella Orologa, a second-year journalism student from Greece, complained that students were not getting enough information from the university. "We don't know what the extent of the problem is and I think everybody should be careful. I asked my GP if I could have antibiotics and he said yes, but when I called the university they said, no, unless you live in University Hall. I am not in any sort of panic but if I can do anything to protect myself I will." Karen Smith, a second-year

undergraduate studying ancient history, had meningitis as a baby and wanted to know whether she might have developed an immunity. "They said it was possible I might have built up an immunity, but there are no guarantees. I think people have been feeling a bit lost up to now," she said after talking to a trust volunteer. She added: "It is best to have the leaflet to know what the symptoms are. I am feeling reassured." Lectures and seminars were continuing to take place as normal at the university yesterday.



Victim: Samantha Milroy, studying pharmacy



Victim: Ann-Marie O'Connor, law student

French police check on 'cheap' British labour

Paul Webster in Paris

FRENCH police are investigating a cross-Channel traffic in cheap labour for building works, and say that British subcontractors involved are flouting French and European social protection laws. The traffic was highlighted in a court case where one subcontractor said he could find unemployed Britons who would work in France for £33 a day, less what he took off them for accommodation. Yesterday a letter was published sent from a British firm to French construction companies saying that Britons were ready to work at least 50 hours a week, including weekends, and forgo overtime. Police said yesterday that at least 14 cases of exploited British work gangs were under investigation in the Pas de Calais, the Lille area, and Normandy. "Most were similar to a case at Argentan, Normandy, where a British subcontractor, Robert Butcher, was fined more than £20,000 and given a year's suspended jail sentence for flouting French and European labour laws. Court officials said that Mr Butcher, who gave his address as Dunsfold, Surrey, did not

appear at the hearing after being released from prison on bail equivalent to his fine. But they quoted remarks he made to an examining magistrate after gendarmes checked workers on a road site at Argentan and found six Britons working illegally. Mr Butcher was accused of failing to provide social security and pay slips, and failing to pay taxes. He told the magistrate that it was easy to find jobless men ready to work for 300 francs a day, £33, because of the "British social climate". He would take a cut to cover accommodation. Mr Butcher said he recruited in pubs, and toured sites in France offering workers for hire. He told the magistrate his methods were "common practice" in Britain. The prosecution claimed that the use of British workers undercut the price of subcontracted work by 60 per cent compared to offers made by legitimate French firms. The letter was published by the communist daily L'Humanité, which coupled it with an attack on John Major for refusing to accept European Union work legislation. The letter was from a recruitment firm in Hovingham, Norfolk, which appears to have gone out of business or under cover. Headed Dornas Bau Limited, and signed by a

manager called Danny Cuomo, the letter was sent to the Lyon branch of the big public works company, Dumex. It was allegedly a copy of letters sent to other large firms. Although French legislation restricts working time to 39 hours, the letter, written in French, said that "our workers are ready to work at least 50 hours a week — working Saturday and Sunday is no problem and, in fact, they prefer this." The firm, which asked to be paid weekly, promised to take care of lodgings and transport but assured French employers that the "appropriate legislation concerning these workers is British law. French law cannot be used in opposition". As a postscript, the firm said it charged £15 francs, £19, an hour per recruit but gave no indication of how much workers would get. The employment ministry said the conditions contravened many regulations. Special permission had to be obtained for overtime, and this was more difficult since the European Union introduced a maximum 48 hour week in November. "The claim that British labour laws can be applied here is nonsense," an official said. "Only territorial legislation is valid unless it is overtaken by European rulings."

'If you are going to get paid rubbish you might as well stay here where you can understand the language'

TREVOR Davis would not cross the Channel to find a labourer yesterday who would have been willing to take up his offer. "If you're going to get paid rubbish you might as well stay here, where you can understand the language," said Mr Davis. Xenophobia aside, there were few qualms about the morality of his offers; only shock about the rates of pay he was offering and the general inconvenience of moving abroad. "I'm quite happy just plodding along here really but I suppose we all have to look out for number one. I don't think we would like it if they did it to us but that's

life isn't it," said Bryan, an electrician. Their reluctance might explain why employers like Cuomo and Butcher recruited not on work sites, but in pubs. For while most labourers insisted that they would never be lured away by an employer like Butcher themselves, nearly all of them knew people who would and have. The big surprise was not that they were going abroad to be exploited but that Butcher's cargo should have headed for France, when wages in Germany and Scandinavia can undercut the local rate and still be relatively high. "You've just got to be young and desperate really. If you've got no family and you're not trained, any amount of money sounds good I suppose," said Mr Davis. "I mean £33 a day might not mean much to me and you but it's about a week's dole money and you're working," he said.

paralysed from the neck down. The car carrying him and two other Britons hit a tree and overturned after the Germans threw a rock through the rear window during a car chase outside Mahlow in the eastern state of Brandenburg last June. Judge Claus Proylla said at the Potsdam court: "We are ashamed of the many cases of stupid xenophobia in Brandenburg." Mr Martin, who is due to be discharged from hospital in Shropshire this week, said he

Judge expresses shame over race attack

Denis Staunton in Berlin

A GERMAN judge said yesterday he felt ashamed on behalf of his community as he jailed two young rightwingers for a racist attack that left a Birmingham building worker paralysed for life. Mario Foetter, aged 24, and Sandro Ristau, aged 18, were sentenced to eight and five years respectively for reckless driving and causing grievous bodily harm to Noel Martin, aged 37, who was

was pleased the defendants had been found guilty, but added: "Even if they were sentenced to a hundred years, I'd still be in a wheelchair. The point is that I've got a life sentence." Mr Martin can now claim compensation from the German criminal injuries compensation board. He hopes to return to Mahlow next year to confront his attackers. "I just want to ask them why they did it because I don't understand hating people because of their race or colour."

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Vivek Chaudhary on trail of terror in Hampshire

Honeymoon ended in kidnapping



Mark Slater, the taxi driver kidnapped and stabbed by the Byelongs

Couple met and married in psychiatric unit

A COUPLE met and married in a mental hospital and then while on honeymoon kidnapped and stabbed a taxi driver and kidnapped a six-year-old boy, a court was told yesterday.

Douglas Byelong, aged 56, and his wife Julie, aged 26, also stabbed and killed a dog. They were ordered to be detained in a mental hospital by Mr Justice Mantell after they admitted at Winchester crown court the kidnap of the taxi driver, Mark Slater, an offence of abduct, and the kidnap of the boy.

The court heard that the couple met at the psychiatric hospital, near Preston, Lancashire, where both were patients. They married last May. Richard Onslow, prosecuting, said: "They met and married in a mental institution. He took her away on honeymoon."

"In the next few days he decided a number of people should be killed, and the result of that decision was a trail of carnage they left behind them."

Byelong, a former Broadmoor patient diagnosed as having a paranoid psychosis, was released into the community soon after his marriage. His wife absconded two months later to join her husband on a "honeymoon" when, on account of her mar-



Lord Lee Turland with his father, Arthur, at the Boot Inn from where the boy was kidnapped

riage, she was given permission for her half-hour walk in the hospital grounds to be extended to one hour.

Mr Onslow told the court that the couple, both armed with knives, kidnapped Mr Slater, aged 29, after calling his cab to a pub near Petersfield in Hampshire, last July. They forced him to drive to Salisbury where he was stabbed and his vehicle taken. They drove to a Hampshire village, Shipton Bellinger, where they stabbed to death a white cocker spaniel and then kidnapped a six-year-old boy, who had been playing on his bike.

The boy was released after pursuing police used spikes in the road to stop the car, and arrested the couple.

Mr Justice Mantell made an interim hospital order against the woman and made another order against her husband ensuring that he is not released.

Mr Mantell told him: "It is not my intention to recount the catalogue of wicked, terrifying things you have done."

"It is essential you should not be released unless exceptional circumstances arise."

The court was told that the taxi driver has not been able to work since the attack, while the boy had nightmares and had lost trust in "small women", including his mother.

Julie Byelong has been in and out of psychiatric hospital since her late teens. She had been resident at the Whittingham hospital for more than a year when she met Byelong, a former printing engineer. He had first been sectioned in 1968 following a conviction for arson.

After three years in Broadmoor maximum security hos-

Schoolgirl 'kick killers' get two years

TWO teenage girls who kicked and killed another girl aged 13 in a fairground fight were yesterday sentenced to two years' detention.

Louise Allen fell to the ground and suffered repeated kicks to her head, one of which killed her, after intervening in the fight in Corby, Northamptonshire, in April.

Her assailants, aged 12 and 13 at the time, were sentenced at Nottingham crown court after admitting manslaughter at a previous hearing.

The dead girl's mother, Ellen Allen, was in court yesterday. Afterwards she said she had expected the two to serve at least four or five years in detention.

The girls, who cannot be named for legal reasons, were



Louise Allen, and fellow pupils paying tribute to her after her death in a fight in April



after leaving the funeral, the other the next day. According to a pathologist, Louise had seven bruises on her head but only the largest was fatal; it was "an unlucky chance" such a kick had killed.

The court was told in the two girls' defence that both had been bullied at school.

and since the death had shown remorse. The night at the fair had been a silly schoolgirl scuffle in which normally no one would have been hurt, said Martin Heslop QC, for the 13-year-old.

"She is extremely distressed and throughout the time she has been in custody struggled in an attempt to come to terms with what has happened. She has shown a sincere and great remorse."

James Hunt QC, for the 12-year-old, said her father had written to her school saying she was being bullied. Mr Hunt told the court: "She is and was a little girl."

Last night Father Niall Sheridan, chairman of the governors of Louise's school, said that pupils had needed counselling after the death, and he expected many to seek further help following yesterday's events.

Insurers pledge to resist lawsuits on exam results

LOCAL authority insurance companies yesterday promised vigorous resistance in the courts to litigation by pupils seeking compensation from their schools after failing to achieve good enough exam results.

Zurich Municipal, the largest local government insurer, said it had a duty to policyholders to avoid out-of-court settlements which might encourage a further rash of speculative claims by disgruntled students.

Jack Rabinowicz, a London solicitor, disclosed at the weekend that he was bringing cases on behalf of two 17-year-olds who claim they were let down by their respective schools. Both of the schools concerned had been criticised by the inspectorate for "failing to provide a satisfactory education".

This provoked anxiety among local authority leaders and school governors that their public liability insurers might settle to avoid costly litigation. Earlier this year the Royal SunAlliance recommended a £30,000 payout to another client of Mr Rabinowicz, who claimed damages for the bullying he allegedly experienced at Sheene School in the London borough of Richmond.

A spokeswoman for Zurich Municipal said the company was confident it could persuade the courts that schools should not be legally liable for pupils' exam results.

"We don't believe there is a solid foundation in law for such cases. It is our duty to our policyholders to avoid opening the floodgates to similar actions. We would defend them in the courts."

A spokesman for Royal SunAlliance said: "We would defend actions of this sort.

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Diana's plea for young on street

DIANA, Princess of Wales, launched a Christmas campaign for the charity Centrepoint yesterday to save young runaways from the perils of living rough on the streets.

She told an audience at the charity's annual meeting in London that children as young as 11 were now homeless. Many had run away from physical and emotional violence while some had fled because of sexual abuse.

She described young people as Britain's "greatest natural resource", and praised the work of the charity for giving them "somewhere to stay and someone to listen".

Centrepoint is one of the six charities Diana has chosen to remain patron of after her decision to withdraw from public life.

She is a frequent visitor to homeless shelters, and has often taken her sons, William and Harry, with her.

Yesterday Centrepoint disclosed figures which show a quarter of homeless young people had been in care. Many had experienced physical or sexual violence, misused drugs or alcohol, or had been in trouble with the police.

Some 11 per cent of children under the age of 16 who ran away had slept rough, while others had stayed with friends or



Diana at the Centrepoint meeting

people they did not know. The charity described the statistic as alarming.

Victor Adebowale, chief executive of Centrepoint, also pointed to a rise in the number of homeless young black people, and said he was increasingly concerned about the increase in teenagers who arrive at Centrepoint hostels with drug and alcohol problems.

Mr Adebowale said his vision of a moral society was one where young people were valued and not "dismissed as a cause of moral decline".

Later the princess made use of a clause in her divorce that allows her use of her ex-husband's London home, St James's Palace, and staged a reception for the English National Ballet.

Each one would depend on the circumstances, but as a matter of principle we would contest them."

The National Governors' Council called on the Department for Education and Employment for urgent clarification of the legal position. "A whole range of cases is lining up and will be tested to the limit at the expense of schools which cannot afford the time or the money to contest them," it said.

The Legal Aid Board corrected reports that Mr Rabinowicz had already secured legal aid for the two 17-year-olds in the latest case.

Applicants had to prove financial eligibility and show there were reasonable prospects of the case succeeding. The board "cannot differentiate between applicants because we think the decision to grant legal aid will be unpopular or lead to similar claims," it said.

David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, said the law relating to school inspection might have to be changed. It was not acceptable that a report revealing faults at a school could be used for legal action against it.

The Office for Standards in Education said its officials were re-examining the wording of reports on failing schools, but no immediate changes were likely.

Julian Gizzi, head of the education law department at City solicitors, Beachcroft Stanley, said the case was an example of a worrying trend towards nuisance litigation.

Clive Lewis, a barrister specialising in local authority law, said claims for damages over exam results would stand little chance of success. "It is likely the court would take the view that there is already a regulatory system designed to address a school's failings - namely, the Ofsted inspection process."

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Rev. Theo Samuel	Martin Sherman
(Church Commissioner for Racial Justice)	

Serbia's conjugal despots



Mirjana Markovic and Slobodan Milosevic heirs to a long tradition of rulers blindly united in despotic tandem

Like other couples who have ruled oblivious to their country's fate, Slobodan Milosevic and Mirjana Markovic may be heading for a fall, writes Julian Borger in Belgrade

IN ALL the Belgrade demonstrations of the past few days, the climactic moment came when the words Slobodan Milosevic were yelled through a microphone. The mass booing and jeering sometimes lasted more than 10 minutes. The baying for his overthrow could be heard for miles.

This is a personalised revolt against a regime which has for years resembled a court more than a modern political system. The top jobs are distributed among family friends and state resources are diverted according to personal whim. All political life revolves around Mr Milosevic and his wife Mirjana Markovic — "Slobo and Mira" — childhood sweethearts turned middle-aged despots.

It is a phenomenon so often repeated there ought to be a name for it. Like Louis and Marie Antoinette, Juan and Eva Peron, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu, Slobo and Mira seem to be locked in a private world, increasingly oblivious to the disastrous state of their country. And like earlier despotic couples, they seem slow to respond to the catastrophe welling up around them, as if their mutual devotion negated the need for wider approval.

"They rely completely on each other and trust very few other people," said a Western diplomat who was involved in last year's Bosnian peace talks.

In the marathon negotiating sessions at the presidential lodge, Mr Milosevic consulted nobody, said the diplomat. "He was alone — a one-man show. One night we talked for six hours and he took calls from only one person — Mira."

Mr Milosevic, a former banker whose rise through the socialist ranks was eased by his wife's family contacts, has been silent throughout the turbulent past fortnight. In fact, he has not addressed his country for more than a year. One of the students' principal demands has been for him to say something, anything, to his disgruntled people.

His wife evokes even more profound hatred. She spent the past two weeks at Federal Yugoslavia's expense, in India promoting her latest book. Between East and South, a collection of her weekly magazine musings about life, love and politics.



Students march through Belgrade yesterday, undaunted by snow and police warnings against further demonstrations

my passion," said the youth Mirjana Markovic calls "my wild young Mustang".

In October a journalist called Milovan Erlic was picked up and badly beaten by the police the day after he printed an article about Markovic's business dealings.

After a six-year flirtation with nationalist rhetoric, the language of the Serbian court has reverted to familiar Marxist jargon. For the purposes of the November election campaign, Bosnia was treated as a far-off country to which Mr Milosevic had brought peace. He was no longer the father of all Serbs

but the embodiment of "the united progressive forces of the left".

The phrase refers to the alliance of the Serbian Socialist Party (SSP) and the United Yugoslav Left (JUL). The latter is not so much a political party as a vehicle for Mr Markovic and her friends, who are steadily gathering the reins of economic and state power.

Although JUL on its own rarely scores more than 2 per cent approval in opinion polls, and won only a handful of local council seats in November, it now controls most Serbian ministries. It is principally an economic venture; its leading members may have been former Marxist professors, but they have proved themselves remarkably adept at making money.

Milosevic's indifference of his wife and her old university friends has weakened his position. The armed forces have resisted coming under its control, but that battle is not over.

Belgrade political analyst, thinks Serbia's ruling couple may actually believe in what they are doing.

"I think in their minds, they are remaking history, and they believe they can change the past," he said. "They have seized control of the trade departments, so it means they have the final say in who gets import and export licenses. Those are the keys in such a closed economy."

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But the Polish turnout has raised hopes. "We are witnessing the beginning of an improved lifestyle, and I see no signs that habits will change back," said Neil Collinson, a scientist with the WHO.

Women in feather hats, men with ponytails, grandmothers and businessmen filled a nutrition class sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventists in Warsaw.

"Don't get nervous when I start talking about vegetarian cooking," the nutrition instructor, Beata Sleszynska, said. "It can be very interesting, really."

A granola recipe flashed up on the wall. Eyes widened. Jaws dropped. Fans took to paper like fat to fire. Tofu was next. Then sugaring jam. By the evening's end, 60 new foot soldiers in Poland's nutrition revolution had entered basic training.

Moscow wins nuclear pledge

Ian Black in Lisbon

NATO will publicly promise not to deploy nuclear weapons in former communist countries which join the alliance in an attempt to defuse opposition from Russia to Nato's expansion eastwards, it emerged last night.

Nato officials at the Lisbon summit of the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) said yesterday, after an agreement was reached on revising a key treaty on arms control, that the pledge would be made in Brussels next week.

The alliance is to say it will not deploy tactical nuclear forces in eastern and central Europe "under foreseeable circumstances", going public with a commitment so far made only privately. Other commitments are likely on non-nuclear forces.

Chirac demands Nato transfer

President Jacques Chirac has told Bill Clinton that transferring Nato's southern command from an American to a European officer is of "capital importance" to France, according to a leaked letter.

In the October 10 letter, a text of which was obtained by Reuters, Mr Chirac set out France's argument for giving the key post — controlling allied forces in the Mediterranean, including Bosnia and the shores of the Middle East and North Africa — to a European.

Diplomatic sources said it was the second personal letter Mr Chirac had sent Mr Clinton on the issue, and followed a rebuff of his first approach. Germany, Italy and Spain have backed the call. — Reuters.

Poles learn about the joys of tofu

Dean Murphy in Warsaw

A REMARKABLE thing is happening in the land of smoked sausage, pork cutlets and deep-fried potato dumplings — being healthy is becoming fashionable.

"It is incredibly exciting how quickly we have recovered from communism," said Dr Witold Zatonski, a Warsaw cancer specialist and author of one of several recent studies on Poland's changing health.

Dr Zatonski was one of many prominent physicians who warned that Poland, along with the rest of the former Soviet bloc, had slipped into a health crisis of unprecedented proportions.

But the Polish turnout has raised hopes. "We are witnessing the beginning of an improved lifestyle, and I see no signs that habits will change back," said Neil Collinson, a scientist with the WHO.

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World news in brief

Civil rights veteran was FBI informer

THE US civil rights movement has been stunned by the release of FBI files which show that a leading civil rights lawyer later appointed to the Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall, was an informer for the FBI.

A 1961 FBI memorandum said Marshall, after years of criticism of the FBI and its director J. Edgar Hoover, "conferred with the bureau on several occasions in connection with his efforts to combat communist attempts to infiltrate the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People".

Initially an FBI target for his work for the NAACP and for his links to allegedly communist front organisations in the 1940s, Marshall was named to a federal judgeship in 1961, two years after his collaboration with the FBI began. At the time Marshall rights leader Martin Luther King.

"Marshall probably realised that if [the NAACP] could not survive without mollifying Hoover," commented Alexander Charns, author of a book on relations between the FBI and the Supreme Court.

He seemed to rely on the FBI for a lot," said his son, Thurgood Jr, an adviser to the vice-president, Al Gore.

Marshall, the first black jurist appointed to the Supreme Court, died three years ago. — *Martin Walker, Washington.*

Reprieve for 'sacked' general

RUSSIA'S senior military commanders were in a state of confusion last night after a top general, said to have been sacked in disgrace by President Boris Yeltsin, was apparently reinstated.

Yesterday morning the defence ministry announced that General Vladimir Semynov, head of the army's ground forces since 1991, had been dismissed by a presidential decree accusing him "of actions incompatible with his post, discrediting the honour and dignity of an officer".

But last night the administration denied that any such decree had been issued, saying simply that the defence minister, General Igor Rodionov, had asked Mr Yeltsin to sack his subordinate. The request was now under consideration.

The harsh terms of the decree were unprecedented — giving no explanation of what the 56-year-old is supposed to have done — and the row is seen as a sign of tensions within the defence ministry over military reform. — *James Meek, Moscow.*

Moldova elects president

A LEADING former communist, Petru Lucinschi, was elected president of Moldova after beating the former Soviet republic's first post-independence leader in a run-off vote on Sunday.

Preliminary results yesterday gave the 56-year-old chairman of parliament an eight-point winning margin over the president, Mircea Snegur, by 54 per cent to 46 per cent. Turnout was 72 per cent compared with 67 per cent in the first round on November 17.

Mr Lucinschi, a top Kremlin apparatchik in the final days of the Soviet Union, presents himself as a social democrat. Favouring close relations with Moscow, he attacked as "savage capitalism" Mr Snegur's plans for faster market reforms, such as the complete privatisation of Moldovan land. — *Reuters, Chisinau.*

Farmers cut Greece in half

FARMERS yesterday cut Greece in half, using hundreds of tractors to tighten their grip on road and rail links to stop all north-south traffic.

Demanding higher produce prices and subsidies from the socialist government, thousands of farmers have since Thursday used their tractors to set up blockades at more than 15 points in central Greece. The main rail link was also cut.

Hundreds of trucks are stuck near the central city of Larissa, headquarters of the protest. Farmers also stopped commercial traffic from reaching Athens by blocking highways to the southern port of Patras. — *AP, Athens.*

Aborigines to claim Darwin

ABORIGINES plan to lodge a land claim covering the city of Darwin in the Northern Territory — the first such demand to take in an Australian provincial capital, the aboriginal Northern Land Council said yesterday.

The Larraikan aboriginal people will tomorrow lodge a native title land claim which covers undeveloped government land including beaches, parks, mangroves, creeks and nature reserves. They will also seek government compensation for past and future development of their traditional lands on which Darwin is built. — *Reuters, Sydney.*

Russians take space walk

TWO Russian cosmonauts ventured out from the orbital station Mir for a space walk yesterday, installing more solar panels in an effort to put an end to occasional power failures.

US astronaut John Blaha remained inside the Mir while Valery Korzun and Alexander Kaleri left for what was expected to be more than a five-hour walk, Interfax reported. — *AP, Moscow.*

Hats off to disarmament

MEMBERS of the Guatemalan Voluntary Defence Committee salute the national anthem before handling in their arms in Aguacatan, one of the last units to demobilise. Set up by the government in the 1980s to patrol rural areas against leftwing guerrillas, the units were widely accused of abusing human rights. Membership was compulsory for men of military age. Government officials and rebels met in Oslo yesterday to complete the details of three accords ending the 36 years of civil war. — *Agencies, Aguacatan and Oslo.*

Cows love rubber waterbeds

A DUTCH rubber factory is producing waterbeds for cows, the daily De Volkskrant said yesterday.

About 180 of the luxury bovine mattresses have been delivered to a farmer in England whose herd has taken to them so well that another 100 are on order. The cows were initially wary of the rubber mattresses, which can be filled with hot water for extra pampering, but having tried them once, they did not want to get off, the farmer said.

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Zaire quick

R

Stolen pages of rare Koran auctioned in London

P

Killing the tax base

Why is Labour so keen to aid the better-off?

LABOUR'S reported proposal to give two million middle-income voters up to £1.6 billion in tax cuts will make immediate sense to all those who believe that Tony Blair's party can and must do anything that will ensure it has a strong enough popular base to oust the Conservatives and win the general election...

tribution unless it is the sine qua non of a Labour victory. But that is surely not the case, as today's Guardian/ICM poll indicates — showing Labour has opened up a 19-point lead over the Conservatives on the back of a 3 per cent swing in a single month...

The school for lawyers

Don't let them in: except in unusual circumstances

SUDDENLY, the most despised people in Britain are stepping forward as white knights — defenders of the poor, oppressed and abused. Are lawyers the answer to the seeming inability of our public services to introduce proper accountability?

the complainant, the energy of the particular lawyer, and the receptiveness of the local court. This is no way to reform a system dealing with seven million children in 26,000 schools. More serious still is the state of the UK's civil justice system, documented in detail by the Woolf Report in July: delays which have lengthened from two to three years...

From Moscow, with waves

What is the real reason for keeping Russia out of Nato?

HOPES THAT the end of the cold war would also mean the end of mystifying defence theory have not been sustained. The attempt to square the circle in Europe by expanding Nato while the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) — now meeting in Lisbon — is strengthened has led to a tortuous formula about a new "overlapping model"...

remain unconvinced anyhow, as prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin stressed yesterday. Moscow's warnings may be over-dramatic, but if Nato did not exist, it would not be invented now. OSCE's current weaknesses are obvious, but efforts could be concentrated on building a new more effective regional organisation.



Letters to the Editor

Acquitted over a rape

LISA Jardine's article about The Rape of the Sabine Women (it may be art, but is it violence, December 2) is breathtaking in its ignorance...

PROFESSOR Jardine appears to make much the same equation as the Westminster councillors over the film Crash, that by banning the depiction, somehow we can banish the realities of sex and violence.

I AM glad the women members of Oxford City Council have questioned the wisdom of having pictures of mass rape on the walls of our town halls.

A shadow minister proceeding in a dangerous direction

JACK Straw's reply to Hugo Young (Letters, November 30) is technically correct in saying that Clause 49 of the Police Bill puts on a statutory basis what is currently done under Home Office guidance.

whether the absence of prior judicial authorisation will satisfy the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights. I had thought his party was intending to introduce a Bill of Rights into our law...

REPRESENTATION of art and suffering does not necessarily identify with the victims. The entire Christian iconography illustrates the contrary. It is a horrific corpus in certain respects.

Such a failure to read the scene is one of female heroism in the cause of peace. The scene is one of female heroism in the cause of peace.

As to how you feel on seeing these films, I would hope that many people were shocked. But some might be horrified, bored or anything depending on the experience and prejudice they bring to the film.

Moreover, it is ludicrous to regard the proposed commissioner as effectively supervising (Mr Straw's italics) the exercise of these powers. The judge appointed to this post will work part-time, look only at a sample of the authorisations...

BY exploiting an ambiguity in the phrase "exercising powers", Jack Straw implies that the new Bill merely gives statutory form to something the police have been doing lawfully for years.

In fact, the entering of property to plant bugging devices will normally have involved the police in trespass. The fact that the courts have admitted evidence obtained in this way does not alter the illegality of its gathering.

THE greatest failing of the painting is summed up in Page's First Law of Aesthetic Appreciation — that the artistic merit of a painting is in inverse proportion to the acreage of canvas covered.

As for Professor Jardine's bizarre claim that images of violence against men would be unacceptable in art galleries, I can only assume that, when researching her book on the Renaissance, she failed to notice numerous Judiths Slaying Holofernes, Executions of John the Baptist, Martyrdoms of St Sebastian and many other similar subjects.



Getting a fix on the Lottery

IT is pleasing to hear from Peter Davis that research is being done on the National Lottery (Letters, December 2); but more is needed than that on basic demographics and spending levels.

EVERY time there is a debate about euthanasia (Hope to die, November 30) I am surprised that no one mentions the solution adopted by an American friend of mine. When she was 94, she told her family that she was tired of living...

Last wishes

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The risks and rewards of Emu

MARTIN Kettle, though basically pro-Emu, is basing his case on a number of factors that are not fully supported by the evidence. The risks he raises to justify this are real, but his fears are overplayed.

without the debt burden increasing to unsustainable levels, then we should be controlling the deficit now. The worry about the inclusion of Italy in Emu, and the fudging of the criteria to let it in, starts to get perverse. If anything, the inclusion of Italy and a bit of fudging mean that the euro may be slightly less strong.

A Country Diary

SOMERSET: A few bedraggled bunches of grapes are still hanging limply from the bare stalks of our vines. The reason is that the main picking, earlier in November, yielded a crop so much more plentiful than last-year's that our limited wine-making capacity is already more than used up.

their own sugar, have to resort to chaptalisation, the artificial addition of sugar, which was first authorised in France by a minister of agriculture called Chapuis. So it is a matter of local pride that this year, although our summer has not been notably sunny, and despite the fact that there was little spraying against the traditional enemies, botrytis and mildew, the wine is bubbling without the aid of artificial stimulants.

سكنا من الاجمل

Diary

Matthew Norman

In dramatic transfer news from the world of fitness and beauty, my old friend Mandy Mandelson appears to have swapped health clubs.

OFF'S insolence about source-checking leads neatly to the vital matter of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's bladder.

WITH the press preview of Fever Pitch tomorrow night in the West End, there are doubts as to whether the book's author will be there.

In a surprise sartorial move, Jack Straw has taken to wearing a fedora. An observer who saw him in Whitehall last week described the tiff as "wider and more dramatic than anything worn by Douglas Hogg".

EVER while he keeps his head down in preparation for the battle ahead, the Defence Secretary continues to impress his European counterparts.

REINFORCING the seasonal message that charity begins at home, the newsletter for members of Portsmouth South Conservative Association has arrived.



Jack Straw is wrong, wrong, wrong

Commentary Hugo Young

SOMETIMES it is necessary to say it again, slowly. When the audience is Jack Straw, Labour's shadow Home Secretary, a matter of principle clearly needs to be described in words of one syllable or risk being mistaken for another matter of purely electoral convenience.

Let me start again. Under the Police Bill, now going through the Lords, the police are being given power to authorise themselves to enter private premises, prepare surveillance, plant bugs, inspect files and do just about anything else in pursuit of criminal investigations.

First, he finds a way of saying the new law is actually benign. It will render legal what is now illegal. The police, it turns out, have been doing this kind of thing for years.

Modern man wants modern woman to be thin. Men control the fashion business. So how does a woman choose to respond? Dorothy Rowe argues that if the choice is bulimia, it is not an illness

A gross distortion

WOMEN who sat and then throw up are said by psychiatrists to be suffering from an illness called bulimia.

The language of illness precludes choice. These poor women have caught this dread disease through no fault of their own.

Do women choose to behave in ways which might be called bulimic? Some women make a very clear, conscious choice that they are going to eat and then, in some private place, throw up all they have eaten.

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villains under scrutiny. The villainies may be anything categorisable as "serious" under the statute, which does not define the word. Strikers and by-pass protesters will be in the frame as readily as Triads or the IRA.

But that is only the beginning of the quest for self-ratifying precedents. Next comes the Security Service Act, which recently permitted SIS to do all these things, and therefore created an anomaly that now demands correction.

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safeguards will exist against them being used without good reason? What defence of even the smallest kind will the citizen have against their arbitrary deployment by a well-meaning chief constable who lacks, as policemen often do, any appreciation of a priority higher than what the law says?

What the Government is offering, instead, is someone else — "a senior judge", Mr Straw gasps in breathless fealty — who will keep an eye on how the new police power actually operates.

A great leap backwards will destroy the central liberty protected by the common law for 200 years

along with this. One might have thought that, before uttering such incredible nonsense, the authorities of either party would have consulted the judiciary itself.

could not compare with a "chief officer of police" as the rightful custodian of these matters.

What the Government is offering, instead, is someone else — "a senior judge", Mr Straw gasps in breathless fealty — who will keep an eye on how the new police power actually operates.

Even if one takes these powers to be, in extreme cases, necessary, the structure put in place around them is a sham, and one that no other serious democratic country permits.

How we turn children into our battlefield



Rachel Cusk

IMAGINE being able to sue your school for being bad. Imagine, as has famously been the case in America, being able to divorce your parents.

The recent findings presented to a select committee on children's health have the curious effect of both tempering one's enthusiasm for the idea of children's rights while at the same time appearing to present an incontrovertible case for them.

Without proceeding to why, it is clear that children are suffering from stress. It could be the result of too much control over what happens to them, or of too little. It could be the mess at home, or it could be the mess outside it.

Without proceeding to why, it is clear that children are suffering from stress. It could be the result of too much control over what happens to them, or of too little. It could be the mess at home, or it could be the mess outside it.

When we see children who are suffering from stress, it could be the result of too much control over what happens to them, or of too little. It could be the mess at home, or it could be the mess outside it.

all of the family. In fact, it might be the case that both regard children as the paper, the medium, for some dishonourable social exchange.

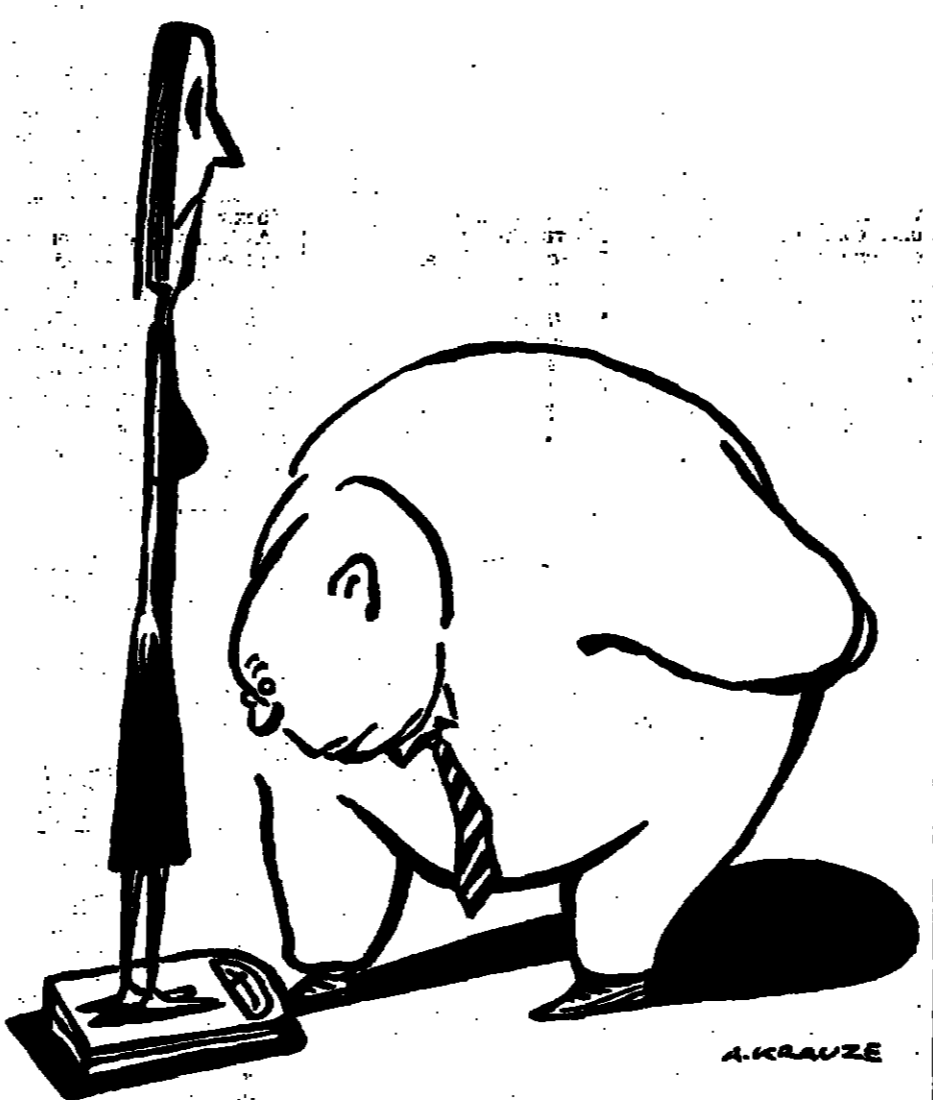
Childhood, like most Victorian inventions, became defunct after the second world war. The evacuation, both as a metaphor for, and a memory of, its violation, still commands a powerful place in our culture.

Childhood is the site for a collision of the great themes of our modern narrative: for us, it is the place where our fondness for the past meets our great fear of the future.

When we give children rights, and the power, both sentimental and actual, to over-ride us, we are not merely surrendering our right to work, we are admitting a defeat that should be inadmissible.

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Riding off into the sunset

ANOTHER MANIFESTO

THERE is a charming story about an elderly lady living in Slough who, every election time, assure every politician of her vote.

There are all in the business of interpreting and making choices. But whereas some of our interpretations are quite idiosyncratic, others we have taken from other people without pausing to consider why these people are presenting such ideas to us.

people who hunted their families to two children. He believes that this would eventually reduce the population to 25-30 million, creating a utopian green and pleasant land.

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George Nicholas

Toon that won the war

Von der Fuehrer says, 'Ve iss der Master Race! Ve Heil! Heil! Right in der Fuehrer's face!

TO QUOTE from Oliver Wallace's once-topical lyric correctly, there should be the word razz!

The film was originally entitled Donald Duck in Nasty Land, but the song was so successful that the studio changed the title to match the ditty before release.

He was born in Vermilion, Ohio, moving to Los Angeles with his family, aged 10. He was hired by Walt Disney in 1932 and learned the art of animation, moving two years



Nicholas worked on a trio of the great Disney feature films, including Lady and the Tramp

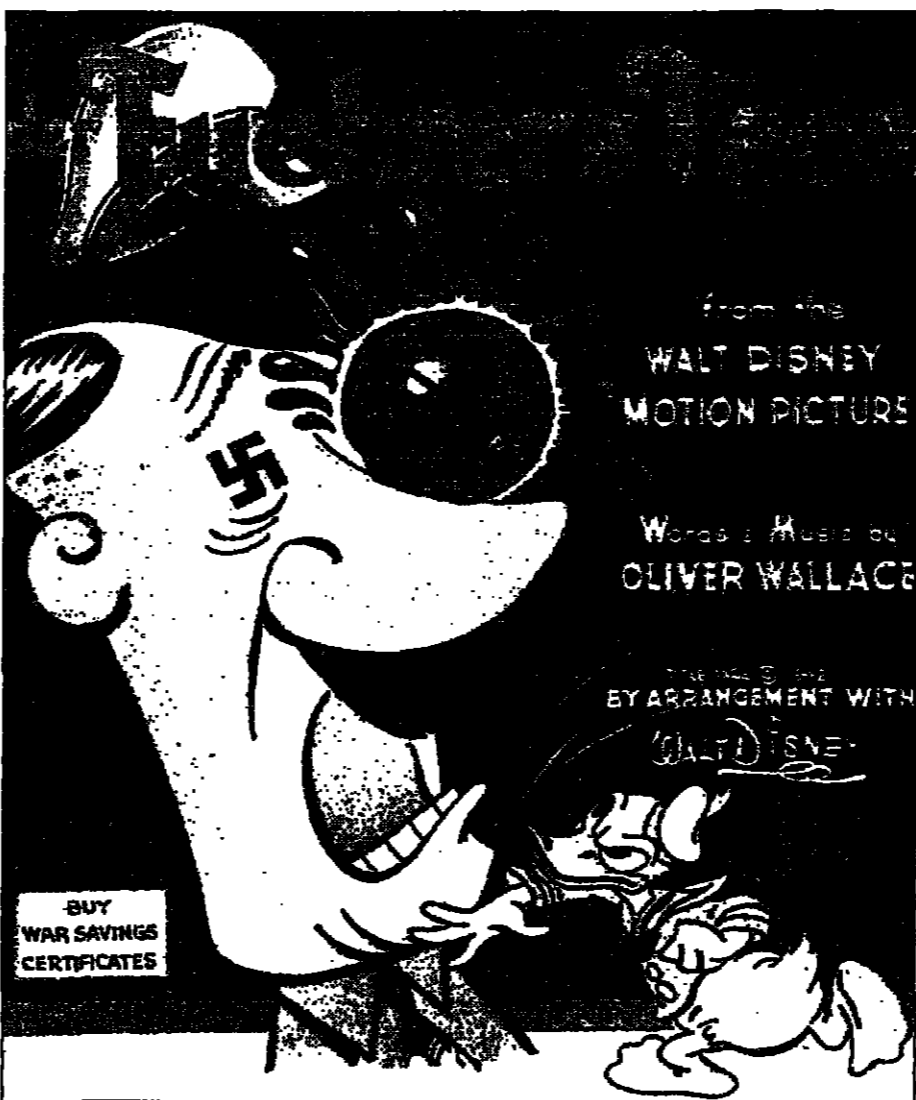
later to the Walter Lantz Studio at Universal Pictures. Lantz had been in the animation business before Disney, and was embarking on his first colour cartoons.

studio - and LaVerne Harding, one of the few regularly-credited women animators.

Later, Nicholas was animator on several cartoons starring Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, including 'Silly Symphonies' and, in 1932, 'Rabbit Hunt'.

Postwar Pluto films for Nicholas began with 'The Legend of Coyote Rock' (1946), which confronted the homing pigeon with a trapeze artist.

Later in the decade, Nicholas moved into feature-length films. His first credit as a character animator was on 'Cinderella' (1950).



Singalong... Der Fuehrer and the Duck

In the 1960s, Nicholas joined the top television cartoon makers, Hanna-Barbera. He was animation director on the 1966 cinema feature 'A Man Called Flintstone'.

'Phantom Tollbooth', which was based on Norton Juster's popular, slightly highbrow children's book. In 1971 he worked with the Canadian/British animator Richard Williams on his award-winning, extraordinarily different version of Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol'.

from Kipling's 'Jungle Book' in the mid-1970s, 'Rikki-Tikki-Tavi' and 'The White Seal'. In 1986 the Motion Picture Cartoonists Guild presented him with a special award.

Michael Haddon

Freedom is more precious than gold

FOR almost half a century Michael Haddon, who has died aged 81, epitomised the faint liberal spirit of Rhodesia.

Michael was then involved in mining development, believing that Africa could be developed by the exploitation of small mines.

He and Eileen had been members of South Africa's Institute of Race Relations and in Rhodesia became increasingly politically active.

He and Eileen had been members of South Africa's Institute of Race Relations and in Rhodesia became increasingly politically active.

After the 1969 Emergency, they played key roles in establishing and running the Legal Aid and Welfare Fund to assist political detainees and their families.

He also helped support the Central African Examiner, a progressive journal, which became the leading of increasing hostility from the Smith regime.

On Michael's release in 1989, he and Eileen left for England, where they were joined by their young son.

Michael Fenton Haddon, mining engineer, born July 12, 1915; died November 7, 1996



Idries Shah... caustic, gentle, funny, always a challenge

Idries Shah To teach the way of the Sufi

IDRIES Shah, who has died aged 72, wrote some 35 books and countless monographs. Much of his writing was meant to present the thought and teaching of Sufism - the mystical and pantheistic Muslim philosophy - to his western audience.

Besides his writing, Shah was also for many years director of studies for the Institute for Cultural Research, a member of the British Association for the Advancement of

Science, a founder member of the Club of Rome, and a company director. Idries Shah was born in India, the first son of Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah and a Scots-

ness', the series of travels which characterised Sufi development. Shah settled in England and attracted a small band of students.

One characteristic of The Sufis, as with the work on Sufism which followed, was his rejection of the beads-and-bangles western yearning for the east mysticism of the 1960s and 1970s.

was a level-headed cross-section of everyday society. Idries Shah's English, like many of the other languages he spoke, was that of a native speaker.

He was survived by his wife, Kashfi, a son and two daughters.

Letter

Anne Dunlop, chair of the Prisoners' Families and Friends Service, writes: We were pleased to read the article in your issue on November 21, 'Thousands of women volunteers, at first drawn from Sylvia's circle of friends, but now coming from the widest spectrum of society, have given up their spare time to help and support to "our" families.'

Birthdays

Trevor Bailey, former England cricketer, 73; Joan Brander, founder, Winged Fellowship Trust, 82; Charles Craig, tenor, 76; Mike Gibson, rugby international, 54; Jeanette Godard, film director, 68; Daryl Hannah, actress, 36; Maxwell Hutchinson, architect, 48; Prof Geoffrey Kirk, Greek scholar, 76; Franz Klammer, skier, 43; David McCall, chairman of Anglia Television, 62; Ralph McTell, folk guitarist, 52; Tanya Moiseiwitsch, stage and costume designer, 82; The Rev Prof Charles Morley, theologian, 88; Paul Nicholas, actor and singer, 51; Victor Pasmore CH, artist, 88; Bob Phillips, deputy director-general, BBC, 51; Mel Smith, actor and comedian, 44; Prof Peter Toynbee, vice-chancellor, rector, John Moores University, Liverpool, 56; Andy Williams, singer, 66; Muriel Wilson, former chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland, 75; Katrina Witt, figure skater, 31.

Death Notices

HORROCKS, Mrs, died 3rd December 1996, aged 87. Buried at St. Andrew's Church, Blandford. Family and friends are invited to a service on Monday, 11th December, 11.30am, at St. Andrew's Church, Blandford. Burial in the churchyard. Mrs. Horrock's family are grateful to all those who attended her funeral. Mrs. Horrock's family are grateful to all those who attended her funeral.

Michael O'Hehir

The voice of Ireland at play

FOR almost 50 years Michael O'Hehir, who has died aged 76, was the voice of Irish sport for thousands of far-flung Irishmen.

later that he had not been able to identify one set of colours as the jockeys were weighing out for the race, so he checked with the jockey wearing them, whose horse, he usually discovered, was called Foinavon.

Ireland and there was an IRA bomb scare. The stands had to be evacuated, but the two O's were abandoned in their perch up on the roof of the stand.

1938. That year he commented on the All-Ireland football final and for the next 50 years his broadcasts on the event were essential listening.



Michael O'Hehir... unflappable in disaster

Kennedy funeral, rubbing shoulders with Richard Dimbleby, who called him "the man from the Grand National".

the Irish Form Book in 1960. He also officiated at several tracks and for a time managed Leopardstown racecourse. He loved a tilt at the bookmakers.

Cocktail party

"G'D TO HAVE lived in the age of Zerkowksi," I sighed as I strolled across the Place Vendôme and into the Ritz Hotel.

Deepest South

ROGER PINCKNEY the tenth... a descendant of an early British official in the Carolinas... remembers when Beaufort had big canneries where the black women snuck oysters. He makes it sound romantic.

Jackdaw



S'Wonderful

FOR Ira Gershwin, having a famous moniker was both a blessing and a curse. Think of the oft-repeated true story of the BBC radio announcer referring to Ira as "George's lovely wife".

the one thing that made him feel young and alive again. Ira rarely shared what was going on inside and maintained a wonderful sense of humour and whimsy.

Bangladeshi greens, or dhenki, their flower plumes flushed a shade of pink more usually seen on Indian wedding saris.

verse and all of 'em come with in the chorus and they'd sing the whole time they were opening oysters. Yeah," he remembers.

Future shock

I VISITED the home of one professional lady who has taken in 14 children... Her little white house, set back from the road in a quiet suburb of Kigali, has a living room with radio switched on to the news, a religious picture above the door and a low coffee table. The giveaway is

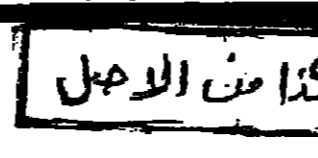
icy oysters -- just by themselves with a drop of lemon, or laid into tiny pastry cases, the caviar a thick carpet on which the oysters wait... Now that's what I call Zerkowksi! In Escoffier's time, there was a passion for everything Russian, and among the cosmopolites, any array of hors d'oeuvres, whether Russian or not, was called by its Russian name, Zerkowksi... the name stuck, at least until DH Lawrence introduced the phrase "cocktail party" in Lady Chatterley's Lover.

Off-shore assets... Islands

SLANDS... Islands... Off-shore assets... Islands

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Finance Guardian

Clarke's sterling dilemma intensifies

Pound breaks mark barrier

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

THE Government's dilemma over the strength of sterling intensified last night as the pound powered through the key DM2.60 barrier against the German mark in New York trading.

With industrialists already rallying against the blow to export competitiveness caused by the appreciation since the summer, market expectations of an imminent rise in UK base rates led to a fresh wave of selling.

The domestic factors pushing up the pound were compounded by remarks from the Bundesbank president, Hans Tietmeyer.

The pound rose by just over a penny against the mark on the City's foreign exchanges, but just failed to climb through the DM2.60 level, closing at 2.5989.

However, renewed pressure on the mark on Wall Street meant the pound was standing at DM2.61 in afternoon trading in New York.

The further appreciation in sterling will sharpen the debate when the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, meets the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, next week to discuss monetary policy.

Mr Clarke is aware that a further increase in base rates could cause more problems for industry by pushing the pound still higher, but will be under pressure from Mr George to take steps to cool the domestic economy.

Evidence of the dual nature of the economy emerged from two sets of figures released yesterday. The monthly report from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply indicated that the strong pound may already be having an impact on the manufacturing sector.

The overall Purchasing Managers Index — a composite of order books, output, stocks, delivery times and employment — fell marginally in November, the first reduction since May. According to the report, industry's output is still rising but the rate of growth has slowed over the last two months.

Data from the Bank of England showed that the narrow measure of the money supply (M0) grew by 0.9 per cent in November, nudging the annual growth rate up from 7.4 per cent to 7.5 per cent.

M0 is seen by some economists as a reasonable guide to the strength of high street activity. Figures have shown the demand for cash on an upward trend this year, with growth in M0 now well outside its monitoring range of 0.4 per cent.

David Coleman, economist with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, said there was a good chance rates would be increased again at the monetary policy meeting a week tomorrow.

Mr Coleman added that the Bundesbank would be content with the foreign exchange reaction as "it will take some of the pressure off the German central bank to loosen monetary policy still further."

Mr Coleman added that the Bundesbank would be content with the foreign exchange reaction as "it will take some of the pressure off the German central bank to loosen monetary policy still further."

Notebook

Eddie's steady eye fixed on Ken



Edited by Mark Milner

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke has pledged that there will be no return to boom and bust for the British economy. Not under his stewardship, at least.

As Mr Clarke acknowledged in his budget address, Eddie (George), the governor of the Bank of England will keep his steady eye fixed on the Chancellor's budget package with the intention of avoiding any further increase in interest rates.

The Abbey National, which has taken the argument on board, has raised its mortgage rates to catch up with the last rise in base rates, but had held off until now in case a further hike was part of Mr Clarke's budget planning.

For obvious political reasons, the Chancellor will not want to see base rates forced up again. The election is just months away. The closer polling day comes, the more difficult will it become for Mr Clarke to head calls for dearer borrowing.

Bad reception

REVENGE may be a dish best served cold, but not in the City. The reaction to the news from Racal that its military radio business would stray into the red this year was swift and savage, knocking more than 18 per cent off the share price.

Davies rejects 'Peak Practice'

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

THE deputy governor of the Bank of England, Howard Davies, yesterday rejected radical proposals which would give the Treasury the leading role in financial supervision in the UK.

Mr Davies described the arguments behind so-called "Peak Practice" concept of regulation where two commissions — one covering systemic risk and the other relations between financial institutions and their retail clients — as "considered and thoughtful".

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.9955	France 6.5290	Italy 2.000	Singapore 2.31
Austria 17.74	Germany 2.5125	Japan 162.90	South Africa 7.26
Belgium 51.82	Greece 309.00	Netherlands 2.9950	Spain 171.40
Canada 2.22	Hong Kong 12.71	New Zealand 2.2995	Sweden 11.15
Cyprus 0.7585	India 90.22	Norway 10.56	Switzerland 2.13
Denmark 53.00	Ireland 147.20	Portugal 203.00	Taiwan 195.479
Finland 7.70	Israel 5.47	Saudi Arabia 6.26	USA 1.0478

Rate rise 'will help sustain recovery'

Jill Papworth
and Sarah Ryle

FEARS among mortgage lenders that the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, will put up interest rates next week to dampen down an "over-heating" economy are driving up the cost of loans, it became clear last night.

Prices rose 0.5 per cent in November and were up 7.2 per cent on a year ago according to the Halifax — and dearer mortgages would put a brake on the housing recovery.

Two of Britain's biggest mortgage suppliers yesterday announced they will raise their rates following Abbey National's decision to increase charges to its 1.6 million borrowers for the first time in two years.

Other abuses highlighted yesterday in Ictis's latest monthly report include: ● Suggestions of sex with animals on a "contact club" service provided by Cord Communications of Liverpool.

that the Chancellor will keep his steady eye fixed on the City that means interest rates will have to go up. Indeed, hardliners reckon the Chancellor should not pussy-foot around with a quarter of a percentage point here or there, but go for a full one point rise.



Drivers from among 200 picked to drive BMWs shipped to Singapore for delegates at the five-day World Trade Organisation ministerial meeting next week. PHOTOGRAPH: RINGA

Watchdog casts fresh eye on chat calls



TELEPHONE regulators have ordered an emergency review of the booming business in "virtual" chatlines and proposals for action are expected next month, it emerged yesterday.

received more than 450 complaints about virtual chatlines during the past 18 months, 273 of which have come in during this year to date.

to companies asking them to fax details of their firms for inclusion in a directory on the Internet. It was not disclosed that the number given for the faxes was charged at an international premium rate.

that its "Racing Telegraph" betting-tip service had picked a 1250-1 winner. Ictis investigated and discovered the payout to have been 38-1.

Former chemicals mogul and finance chief convicted on MTM false accounting charges

RICHARD Lines, one-time chemical-industry mogul and self-described ex-member of the elite Special Boat Service was yesterday found guilty of fraudulently inflating his company's worth by £250 million. An Old Bailey jury convicted Lines on two counts of false accounting and one count of making false statements.

had propped up the profits of his MTM chemical company by shuffling money and using false documents to conjure up records of sales that had never happened. His former finance director, Thomas Baxter, was convicted on one charge of false accounting and one of making misleading statements, but cleared on a second false-accounting charge.

career as salesman-manager at ICL Floated in 1986, MTM grew rapidly, but on March 2, 1992, it announced its accounts would be delayed and profits would be short of the £23 million expected by the City.

Tories back heavier lorries

HEAVIER lorries on the roads, raising the current limit from 38 to 44 tonnes — and the blood pressure of transport campaigners — were approved in principle by the Government yesterday.

and from ports, provided this can be done without any increase in lorry miles.

tonner would produce "superior environmental and economic benefits" and would not adversely affect the growth of freight rail opportunities.

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David Tennant, who appears as Touchstone in *As You Like It* at London's Barbican theatre, gives brewers at Teddington distillery a celebratory performance to mark Allied Domecq's renewal of sponsorship of the Royal Shakespeare Company for two years

Directors targeted by chairman's dismissal call Emap rebels ousted after 'bitter row'

Ken King

KEN SIMMONDS and Joe Cooke, the two rebel directors involved in a bitter boardroom row at Emap, were last night unrepentant after being ousted from the media group's board in an extraordinary general meeting. During the meeting at London's New Connaught Rooms, the pair were defeated after institutional shareholders overwhelmingly backed Emap's chairman, Sir John Hoskyn, who had led calls for their removal. However, they still won support from investors — including institutions — representing over 10 per cent of every vote cast, while Sir John had to endure a stream of criticism from angry shareholders. The meeting also saw a number of attacks on Emap chief executive Robin Miller, who had been widely expected to replace Sir John when he retires in the summer of 1998, but who is now likely to encounter opposition. During the meeting, Sir John reminded shareholders of the events leading to the row, which centred on controversial changes Emap made to its articles of association during the summer.

The changes, opposed by the rebels, made it possible to remove directors if three-quarters of the board approved. At a meeting in July to approve the new rules, Sir John pledged they would not be used to remove the pair. But Sir John, who subsequently asked Professor Simmonds to resign, said the relationship between the rebels and the rest of the board had now deteriorated even further. He added: "Will shareholders fine the board and back Ken and Joe, or keep the board? That's what it boils down to." In response, Prof Simmonds said neither he or Mr Cooke regretted that the issue had come to an extraordinary general meeting, adding that the damage done to Emap's share price by the row was less than the potential damage that an inappropriate governance structure could cause. He added: "I don't think this meeting is about Joe Cooke and I trying to protect our jobs on the Emap board — we have served long enough. However you vote, we shall sleep easily, as we have discharged our duties as non-executive directors." During his speech, Mr Cooke attacked Mr Miller, speculating as to why he had

readily backed the changes to the articles. Describing Mr Miller's behaviour as "power-seeking and manipulative", he said there was now a question about whether he deserved to succeed Sir John as chairman — adding that the other non-executives had been "whipped into line" by Sir John. Mr Cooke, who was heckled by a number of Emap staff attending the meeting, added: "We are expensible, but we believe that our duty has been done; more shareholders have now got the vital message that changes made at the agm represent a potent threat to the future profitability of Emap." The rebels were backed by Firc, the corporate governance consultancy, whose joint managing director, Anne Simpson, called on Emap to replace Prof Simmonds and Mr Cooke with two new non-executives. They also won support from Sir Frank Rogers, a former chairman of Emap, who said the board should have considered alternatives to July's changes. After the meeting, Sir John thanked Prof Simmonds and Mr Cooke for their "tenacity and advocacy", and said he regretted the publicity the row had attracted. Emap shares closed 5 1/2p higher at 735 1/2p.

Racial warning of profit cut stuns City

Tony May

RACAL, the telecommunications and defence electronics group, stunned the City yesterday with a warning that profits would be down by nearly one-third this year. It was punished by seeing £145 million wiped off its stock market value. Analysts noted that in August, chairman Sir Ernest Harrison, had said profits would be up this year — a statement that the company had re-

peated that since six weeks ago after its joint stockbroker, Merrill Lynch, downgraded its profits forecast. Some observers said powerful City fund managers were furious with the board and could push for resignations. In the longer term, the group might fall prey to a predator. The board said a plunge in military orders at its Radio Group business, particularly from the Middle East, would push that operation into the red and slash group profits for the full year by £20 million to about £50 million. That includes an already announced

exceptional charge of a further £20 million for the reorganisation of its Data Group — which is best known for operating the National Lottery network. Since the Gulf War, Racal, which once claimed about 25 per cent of the military radio market outside the US, has seen its share progressively eroded by US companies such as ITT and Texas Instruments. It has lost out on contracts from Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait and has also faced tougher competition from French companies such as Thomson

in a market that has not grown as quickly as expected. The news shocked City analysts, who had been forecasting a rise in profits of about one-third to between £65 million and £94 million for the full year, and in minutes the shares fell nearly 30 per cent to a 22-month low of 224p. Analysts will be pressing the group hard at a meeting today when the board promises to make a full statement after announcing a fall in half-year profits from £31.9 million to £21 million. The Radio division — which also supplies

every UK police force as well as the Navy, Customs and Ministry of Defence police services — was spending millions of pounds on development of battlefield systems in a bid to win an off-delayed Army contract worth a potential £2 billion. But this contract will not be awarded until early 1999. Paul Beaver, an analyst with Jane's Defence Weekly, the London-based industry magazine, speculated that Racal has just been eliminated from a £250 million contract to provide military radios for the United Arab Emirates,

which he predicted would be awarded to a French company next year. The best gloss Racal could put on affairs yesterday was to say that progress was being made with Data Products, where first-half losses were similar to last year's after additional £5 million expenditure on research and development. The board expects the Data sector to generate a modest profit in the second half. Racal added: "With a substantial increase in profits from the Data Group, the results in 1997-98 will be much improved."

Regulator slows electricity market

Simon Bewis
Industrial Editor

FEARS that a "big bang" introduction of competition in the domestic electricity market could plunge the system into chaos yesterday led the industry watchdog to unveil a slow-burn beginning to liberalisation. The industry has been preparing for the introduction of competition in April 1998 since its privatisation, six years ago, but the regional companies have been castigated for dragging their feet and trying to protect local monopolies. The power companies have stepped up pressure for the start-date to be put back, and Stephen Littlechild, director general of electricity supply, gave way yesterday, announcing plans to phase in competition over six months.

In a consultation paper, the regulator said he proposed to open the door to competition for only 2 million customers in April 1996. Eight weeks later, a further 3.5 million customers will be brought in, then after another eight weeks the net will widen to include another 6 million. The remaining 50 per cent will be brought in from September 16. Prof Littlechild said at every stage pilot areas would be chosen within each franchise region. He insists that the chosen areas should offer a broad spectrum of customers. The opening of the gas market has seen widespread computer problems, and billing errors. A total of 19 organisations are trying to co-ordinate, provoking concerns that the same disruptions seen in the gas market will be repeated with electricity.

Kenwood tries to blend right management mix

OUTLOOK/Rebel shareholders push for merger as profits slip at kitchen appliance maker. LISA BUCKINGHAM reports

KITCHEN appliance group Kenwood is in danger of looking like a training ground for company doctors. The company will today reveal interim profits which are likely to be closer to the £8 million achieved two years back than the £7.4 million scored in the first half of last year. It will be the second time in the group's four years as a publicly quoted company that it has had the unpleasant task of announcing an earnings reversal — a shock despite a recent warning. Atrocious conditions in its main European markets, Italy and France, have scarred the performance, which was already under pressure following an over-ambitious series of acquisitions. The results will appear to underline the arguments now being put by rebel shareholders, the UK Active Value Fund headed by Julian Treger and Brian Myerson, that Kenwood is doomed to underperform the stock market and investors should sell out *protostissimo* to almost any suitor willing to cough up. Following reports that household appliance group Pifco — whose brands include Russell Hobbs and Carmen electric hair curlers — has ap-

proached from Pifco falls short of a serious bid and to keep the Takeover Panel happy — will say as much with its results today. That could mean the company's dissidents have to burn on a slightly longer fuse. Other shareholders are likely to give the highly credible new management at Kenwood 12 months to pull the company round — it seems improbable that a chairman of the calibre of David Nash, who was tipped for the top job at Grand Metropolitan, would be unable to command a stay of execution from serious investors. An overhaul of the Kenwood boardroom should be complete once a marketing director is brought on board. Crucially, Antony Douglas's appointment as director of manufacturing indicates a rethink of this part of the group's operations. Details of a wider strategy review may also emerge today. Kenwood's new brooms should be able to produce savings. And, given the tendency of new managements to load much as possible in their own favour, any bounce back will take place from a low base once all the possible bad news has been included in today's figures. Kenwood's problems may in the end defeat Mr Nash's team. But shareholders who have seen the value of their shares gyrate between 300p and 180p may as well hold on a little longer.

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South African media stymies Pearson

Russiah Nicol
In Johannesburg

PEARSON'S attempt to move into the South African media market has been derailed after Caxton, a local newspaper group, won a court case that allows it to stop the deal in its tracks. Pearson was due to complete a deal with the Times Media Group on Thursday which would have given it control of the two main business newspapers, *Business Day* and the *Financial Mail*. Business Day, which sells 38,000 copies a day, had even planned to honour its incoming owner by printing an issue on pink paper. In the wake of the judgment, Terry Moolman, Caxton's managing director, was yesterday making up his mind about whether to take out an injunction to stop the deal. Meanwhile, he advised Pearson not to proceed without consulting him. "All we're saying is: 'Let's just think about this,'" he said. The judgment that has allowed Caxton to put the boot in surrounds a "restraint of trade" agreement between the two halves of Caxton was bought by Anglo Holdings — part of mining conglomerate Anglo American — in 1980. At that time, Argus had planned to buy Caxton outright, although it never happened. Under the terms of the agreement with Caxton, Argus was prevented from publishing local newspapers or magazines. After the 1994 election, Anglo American unbundled its media assets, selling 49 per cent of a newly formed group, Times Media, to the National Employment Consortium, which is designed to broaden black ownership of South African businesses. Other newspapers were sold to Tony O'Reilly's Dublin-based Independent group.

VW shares stall over spy row

GM refuses to drop charges against car rival, says Denis Staunton in Berlin

SHARES in Volkswagen, Europe's biggest carmaker, fell by almost 6 per cent yesterday after General Motors made clear it would not drop charges of industrial espionage against its arch-rival despite last week's resignation of VW executive, Jose Ignacio Lopez. VW shares fell as much as DM36.50 (€14) to DM282.2, or almost 6 per cent. The shares took a similar dive last week after an American court allowed GM to proceed with its industrial espionage lawsuit against VW under racketeering legislation. Investors showed their disappointment and anxiety that the resignation of purchasing chief Mr Lopez had not brought VW any closer to a settlement with GM, said Michael Klein, an analyst at Delbruck & Co. GM and its German subsidiary, Opel, accuse Mr Lopez of stealing industrial secrets when he left the company to join VW in 1993, taking seven other GM executives with him. The two sides are due to appear in a Detroit court today for the latest stage in a civil action GM is taking against VW under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. The sacking of Mr Lopez was one of GM's chief prerequisites for an out-of-court settlement but there is little or no sign of agreement on two other demands — a full

apology and a large financial settlement. Both were reaffirmed at the weekend by David Herman, Opel's American chairman, who said, however, that an out-of-court settlement was desirable. "I can't imagine that if someone admits an error and wants to rectify the situation we would not be willing to talk to them," he told the Wall Street Journal. But VW fears that by admitting wrongdoing on the part of Mr Lopez, it could prejudice criminal proceedings pending in both Germany and the United States. It favours a mutual expression of regret by both sides, with GM admitting that it unfairly damaged VW's reputation with its spying accusations — an acceptable trade-off, according to GM executives. GM executives are furious at Mr Lopez's continuing support for Mr Lopez, who will continue to draw a salary of more than DM400,000 a month from VW until his contract expires in 1998. "Usually you'd see people distancing themselves from an individual defendant and pledging co-operation with the authorities," one GM source reportedly said. GM refuses to say how much financial compensation it wants from VW but German media reports have mentioned figures as high as DM7.5 billion. VW denies that it inflicted any financial damage on its rival but it could be prepared to agree to compensating GM by other means. Mr Lopez floated this idea in October but the bitterness of the dispute between the two car giants meant that no progress could be made on such a deal until he left VW. VW yesterday sought to fill the management gap left by the departure of Mr Lopez, who is credited with turning around the company's fortunes. VW shares fell more than 490 to close at 593, down 25.75, or 4.1980 after falling as low as DM582.2.

S&N trumpet return of the community pub

Roger Cowe

SCOTTISH & Newcastle's chief executive, Brian Stewart, yesterday heralded the return of the community pub, recently neglected by brewers in favour of busy city centre locations. "Brewers were backing off doing things in these pubs. We have all been concentrating on the high street," Mr Stewart said. S&N has been introducing the Barras brand to pubs outside city centres and high streets and has now decided the idea will be "aggressively rolled out" over the next two years. The development of the first 24 pubs, it said, had succeeded in luring more people into these local pubs, while

the provision of food increased spending. As a result the investment has produced a 25 per cent return on capital. Mike Benner, of the real ale campaign Camra, welcomed the investment but warned against what he called "the McDonaldisation" of the pub, with increasing use of themes. The success of Barras and the new Chef & Brewer format will build on what Mr Stewart described as "an outstanding six-month period" in S&N's pub business. The number of pubs fell to comply with Monopolies Commission conditions attached to the Courage takeover, but sales rose by 4 per cent over, but profits increased by double that rate to £87 million.

Total profits rose by more than a quarter in the period, boosted by the inclusion of Courage for the full six months, and despite difficulties in the leisure division, which embraces Center Parcs and Pontins. Leisure profits fell by 11 per cent to £45 million as the continental Center Parcs sites suffered from poor economic conditions and a number of one-off costs. In brewing, the new Scottish Courage division produced profits of almost £90 million. Mr Stewart said the company had lost some market share. However, part of this lost volume had been replaced by soaring exports, while profits had also been supported by a 4 per cent real increase in marketing.



Jose Ignacio Lopez: investors worry

صكنا من الالهي

Stars appet Becke

Tennis

Stars find no appetite for Beckerfest

Stephen Bierley in Munich

ONLY a short time ago the organisers of the Compaq Grand Slam Cup were crowding out the line-up for the dollar laden men's end-of-season tournament, which opens this morning with Germany's Michael Stich, the former Wimbledon champion, playing Britains' Pete Sampras, whom every British fan would love to see win Wimbledon. Or anything.



Davis delight... France's Arnaud Boetsch silences critics of the cup

when Sampras defeated the 20-year-old German. The ATP Finals, in which the world's top eight players compete, will doubtless survive even if it has to switch countries, because the players run the tour and you will catch them pulling out of their own event. They care less for this competition which falls under the auspices of the International Tennis Federation, which runs the four Grand Slams.

Sport in brief

Tyson's record rake-in

MIKE TYSON may have lost his world heavyweight title but he tops the 1996 earnings table by a knockout margin. According to Forbes Magazine his three fights this year amassed \$76 million (\$45 million), a record for any sportsman in a single year. Basketball's Michael Jordan, with \$52 million, slips off the top for the first time in five years but could bounce back with a \$30 million contract and merchandising expected to total \$100 million next year.

Cycling

Miguel Indurain resumed training yesterday, sheding widespread speculation that the five-times Tour de France winner was about to retire.

Hockey

The seven-times champion Scottish, the most successful club in the history of the EA Cup, have drawn Premier Division opposition for the third successive round of this winter's competition, writes Pat Rowley. The joint leaders of the National League are away to Struthorn, who held them to a 2-2 draw at Long Dittin in the league a month ago. Most of the nine Premier clubs left in the competition have been given a great chance to reach the last eight, the only other all-Premier match is between Old Longhorns, last season's runners-up, and Hounslow, former winners.

Racing

Caumrue chaos leads to Plush win for Harvey

THE pantomime season opened at Wincanton yesterday when a series of bizarre incidents enabled 'Too Plush' to come home the luckiest of winners in the Nightingale Stags Handicap Chase. Caumrue, a faller at the same fence on the previous circuit, galloped the wrong way up the straight.

But they were also hampered by the Caumrue and the Mine Captain, who rode to a distant second. The Mine Captain was renounced to finish third, three lengths away. Winning jockey Luke Harvey beamed as he returned to the winner's enclosure: "This is the luckiest winner I have had in my life."

done everything we wanted him to do for win. He jumped well but just didn't like in front and we'll keep a low profile with him for now." However, the stewards were far from impressed with Derek Byrne's use of the whip aboard the runner-up and banned him for three days (December 11 to 13) for improper riding. Maguire has at last put his injury problems behind him and looked more his old self in a driving finish on Pharanear. He can enjoy further success at Newton Abbot today. Hawaiian Youth (2.30) is an interesting ride for Maguire in the Cork Handicap Chase. Formerly trained by Richard Rowe, Hawaiian Youth has won first time out for the past three seasons and will not mind the testing conditions underfoot.

Newcastle runners and riders with form guide

Table listing Newcastle runners and riders with form guides. Includes names like 1.200 Barton Heights, 1.00 Altham, 1.00 Political Tower, 1.00 Altham, 1.00 Political Tower, 1.00 Altham, 1.00 Political Tower.

Table listing Newcastle runners and riders with form guides. Includes names like 1.00 POLYTON and NEWCASTLE FLOODED BOVINE HURDLE, 1.00 POLYTON and NEWCASTLE FLOODED BOVINE HURDLE, 1.00 POLYTON and NEWCASTLE FLOODED BOVINE HURDLE.

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Southwell (All-weather Flat)

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Newton Abbot

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All set for the Munich cashfest, page 13
Jan Molby and the Welsh dimension, page 14

Russell discarded by England again, page 15
Rangers suffer withdrawal symptoms, page 14

SportsGuardian

SOCCER

Emerson in Brazil and Boro back in crisis

Michael Walker

THE saga of Emerson's future with Middlesbrough took another twist yesterday when it emerged that the midfielder will miss tonight's Premiership visit of Leicester because he is back in Brazil.

The reason is again his 21-year-old wife, who is reluctant to settle in Middlesbrough. Last week Emerson admitted in an interview with the Guardian that she was unhappy but dismissing all speculation about his future as a mixture of press speculation and misunderstanding, he said he expected her to return to England on Sunday.

However, sources close to the player said he received a telephone call on Friday to say she did not want to leave Brazil.

Emerson was due to make his return from a three-match suspension at the Riverside stadium tonight in a game for which Middlesbrough have seven players injured, including Juninho. However, instead of naming him on the team sheet yesterday, Bryan Robson was again forced to talk about the Brazilian's future.

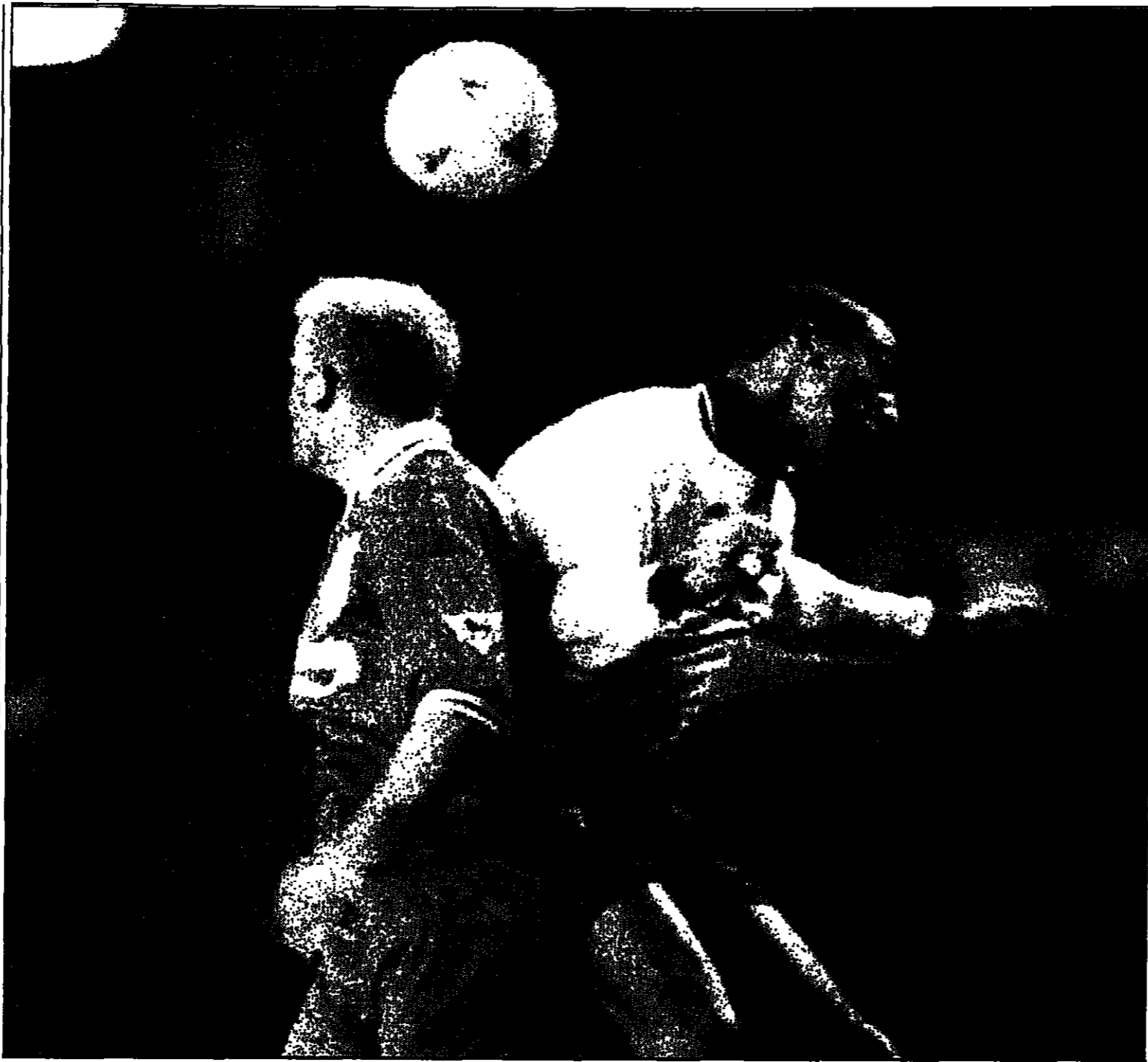
"There are only two ways this can work: Emerson plays for us or he's back on a beach in Brazil," said the manager. "He signed a four-year contract here and he's not for sale."

Later Robson added: "His wife is over there and he was given permission to go and pick her up. He will probably be back tomorrow and then we can sit down and talk about the problems. We will try in every way to make his wife content here. We will help in every way we can, but that's as far as we can go."

Emerson had seemed hopeful that the future would die down and that Middlesbrough would sign his cousin Fabinho, formerly of the Portuguese side Belemenses. Fabinho has trained with Boro for 10 days and is married to Emerson's wife's sister.

The club thought such a move would be helpful to everyone, but now they must be considering how long this embarrassing tale can drag on.

Meanwhile, Robson admitted that Middlesbrough have bid for Nadal, Barcelona's £3 million defender. "There is a deadline in Spain for signing players of December 7, though, so unless Barcelona get someone in very quickly then it could be difficult for us," he said. "We have put in a bid. Barcelona haven't accepted it but we are continuing to monitor the situation."



Heads you win... Liverpool's Mark Wright beats Chris Armstrong to a high Tottenham centre at White Hart Lane last night. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Premiership: Tottenham Hotspur 0, Liverpool 2

No respite for Spurs

Russell Thomas

TOTTENHAM responded spiritedly last night to the Bolton debacle but were undone by a side level on points with the leaders Arsenal. A slick finish by Michael Thomas, recalling the verve of his days elsewhere in north London, was followed by a freak goal by Steve McManaman.

Gerry Francis, who had spent Saturday at home with a temperature of more than 100°F, was even better under the collar yesterday after talk of a confrontation with his captain Teddy Sheringham after the Bolton game and rumours that the England striker was on the verge of leaving Spurs. "Complete and utter rubbish," was the manager's angry response.

The one predictable absentee from his ranks was the luckless Darren Anderton, down this time with suspected knee-ligament trouble. Better news for Spurs was the announcement that Steffen Iversen had signed from Rosenborg for £2.7m. The 20-year-old Norwegian striker will join on Thursday, subject to a medical.

The crowd soon conveyed their hunger and Spurs responded eagerly. They forced the early pace but Liverpool made the first dangerous break when McManaman sprinted on to a deflected Nielsen pass. Sinton unceremoniously brought him down and was booked.

White Hart Lane held its breath as Berger, playing just behind Fowler, took the free-kick and unleashed a 25-yard shot that Walker dived to his right to save.

The pattern was repeated seven minutes later but this time deep in Liverpool territory. McManaman committed a vengeful trip on Sinton, and the winger responded by curling in a free-kick that was

fumbled by the advancing James. Armstrong centred from the right and the Liverpool goalkeeper was grateful when a deflection diverted it into his hands.

The opening had promised much more than the untidy stalemate into which the game then descended. There was abundant movement and a host of good intentions, but clear-cut chances were few until the final seconds of the half.

Two back-heads by Armstrong gave Spurs encouragement. The first flew just over the bar, and the rushing Sheringham just failed to connect with the second from close range. Then Ruddock, deep in his penalty area, dallied over a clearance and had to lash the ball wildly towards Fox. The winger's cross was met smartly by Sheringham, whose low shot flew wide.

Deeper disappointment was etched in Spurs' faces at the interval. Seconds before the break, an angled pass from

Barnes found Thomas, who timed his run perfectly to slip alongside of Calderwood and Howells and fire a low drive unerringly past Walker's right hand into the far corner.

Muted boing accompanied the Spurs players of the pitch and the limping Armstrong did not return. Allen taking his place. Three minutes later, a deep insult was added to this injury when McManaman turned Carr and sent in a speculative shot from 25 yards.

Walker sprang to his right in anticipation, only to see the ball strike a divot just in front of him and bounce over his upstretched hands. The Tottenham goalkeeper permitted himself a useful smile before checking the big screen to convince himself he had really been beaten in this bizarre manner.

Liverpool could have added a third goal midway through the second half when Berger sprinted down the left and delivered a precise low cross

that McManaman wastefully side-footed wide of Walker's left hand post.

To compound Spurs' depression, a seemingly legitimate back-header by Sol Campbell, who beat James to the ball in the 67th minute, was disallowed for shoving.

Tottenham Hotspur: Walker; Carr, Calderwood, Campbell, Wilson, Fox, Nielsen, Howells, Sinton, Armstrong, Sheringham.

Liverpool: James; McAteer, Wright, Ruddock, Babic, Sierrosby, McManaman, Thomas, Barnes, Fowler, Berger. Referee: G. Poll (Tring).

The first and proper voice of motor racing



Richard Williams

IT IS COMMON with other organisers, the Automobile Club von Deutschland decided to reduce the German Grand Prix from its former powerful position down to a 'milk-and-water' type of event by reducing the distance from 22 laps of the Nürburgring to 15 laps, a mere 342 kilometres...

Those words were the first motor racing journalism I ever read. The man who wrote them, almost 40 years ago, thought that a race lasting two hours and 20 minutes, over a 14-mile circuit featuring 175 corners lined with trees and ditches, contested by men in fibreglass helmets, string-backed gloves and cotton polo shirts, in cars without seatbelts, roll-over bars or fire extinguishers, could reasonably be described as "a milk-and-water type of event".

His name was Denis Jenkinson, and he was the doyen of British motor racing writers. His death at 75 was announced by my colleague Alan Henry on yesterday's obituary page. Naturally enough, Henry and other memorialists concentrated on Jenkinson's most celebrated single achievement, which was to navigate for Stirling Moss a famous victory in the 1956 Mille Miglia, when they averaged 97mph for more than 10 hours over public roads from Brescia to Rome and back.

But for me, as for many others, Jenkinson's contribution was far more profound. Over a period of years his writing implanted a set of beliefs that together defined what constituted a motor race and what it took to be a proper racing driver.

As the Continental correspondent of Motor Sport, he spent the summer driving from one race to another, from the great temples of Monza, Monaco, Rheims, Spa and the Nürburgring to lesser meetings at Syracuse, Bordeaux, Bari and Naples. In those days there was little print or TV coverage of grand prix racing, and Jenkinson's lengthy, close-set reports, published weeks after the event, represented the authorised version. In superficial terms, I suppose he was a bit of an anorak. There were many photographs

of his diminutive, bearded figure bending over Ferraris and Maseratis, logging chassis numbers or spotting tiny modifications. He would be the first to notice when BMW moved their oil cooler from the left to the right of the engine, and he could tell his readers the exact angle at which Colin Chapman canted the engines of the Lotus 16.

He loved and understood good engineering, and he thought the men who designed the cars were just about as important as the glory boys who drove them.

But he was also, in his flinty way, a romantic, and the technical esotericism always came after the report of the race. He never hid his admiration for the courage and skill of the best pilots, to the extent that his 1968 book *The Racing Driver* still represents the most substantial and thoughtful analysis of the craft, with conclusions which hold good in today's very different conditions.

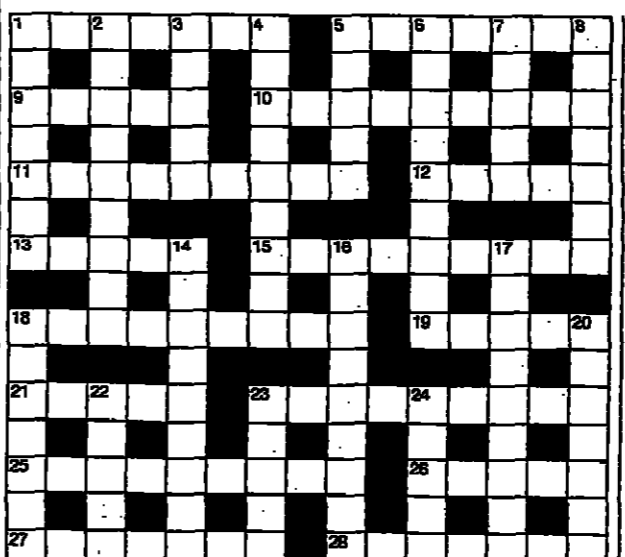
He was interested in finding out what made a racing driver different from you or me, and he realised that the proportion of these qualities might vary between individuals of comparable achievements. His descriptions of watching a great driver lift a team's morale with a single brilliant practice lap provided a humanising view of the sport.

Along with enthusiasms came prejudices. As the product of a generation that had lived through a bloody war, he despised the campaigns of Jackie Stewart and others to introduce safety precautions. He liked tracks with natural hazards: manhole covers, kerbs, tramlines. He wanted Stewart to prove himself against the same tests that Fangio had faced, which was an unrealistic expectation in a changing world. Yet he was never nostalgic or sentimental. In his eyes, Ayrton Senna was the equal of any of the idols of his youth.

THERE was no style or grace to his prose, which was as functional as he thought good engineering should be. But in his hands the words made you feel that you were sitting alongside him, watching the Ferrari mechanics turn a pit-stop into a moment of slapstick comedy, or sitting down after the race to a relaxed meal with the drivers. I last saw him at Monza three or four years ago, standing on the balcony above the paddock, watching Jean Alesi talk to his mechanics behind the Ferrari pit. A proper racing driver. Proper red cars. No one did more to frame that view.

Guardian Crossword No 20,826

Set by Crispa

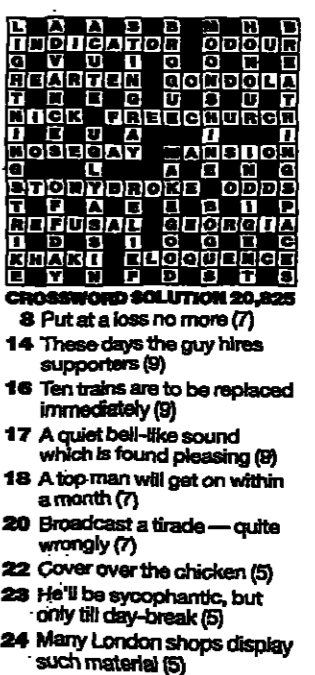


Across

- 1 Gain the utmost benefit from enterprise (7)
- 5 Relative — an odious word (7)
- 9 Card returned to a despicable man (5)
- 10 Note for an alteration in the time (5)
- 11 A cross on a church carpet (5)
- 12 Fish taken first by inexperienced novice (5)
- 13 A bath can be invigorating — in all probability that's a unanimous feeling (5)
- 15 Outspoken disapproval by builders about strike (5)
- 16 Figure the class may be the only one of its kind (5)
- 19 More mature, yet go hell for leather with little hesitation (5)
- 21 Better Mediterranean holiday resort, right? (5)

Down

- 1 Catches parents out (7)
- 2 It's most important that boat carries a painter and medic (5)
- 3 X used repeatedly (5)
- 4 Yielding and giving up vehicle and furniture (5)
- 5 Speak without qualification (5)
- 6 The janitor's no casual worker (5)
- 7 A dilt reversed in Portugal (5)



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Sacchi's exit a worry for Hoddle

Paddy Agnew in Rome

ROBERTO BAGGIO and Gianluca Vialli may come out of the international wilderness to haunt England now that Italy's coach Arrigo Sacchi has finally jumped ship, five months after his sell-by date. Glenn Hoddle always knew his side would face the toughest test yet of their character when the Italians, still smarting from their ignominious Euro 96 exit last summer, visit Wembley for the February 12 World Cup qualifier.

At first glance, news of Sacchi's abrupt decision to walk out on the Azzurri and return to his old hunting ground at AC Milan appeared to indicate England might face a team in disarray for what could be the decisive game on the trail to France 98. But the downside — from an English perspective — is that Sacchi's departure could see the return to international colours of the star trio discarded by the coach.

The Chelsea striker Vialli, Milan's Baggio and Lazio's Beppe Signori all fell foul of Sacchi, who preferred Stamford Bridge's latest recruit, Gianfranco Zola, to Baggio.

Although no one could say that Sacchi's resignation came as a shock, his decision immediately to climb back on to the managerial tightrope — where he will be rene acquaintance with Baggio — does prompt intriguing questions. Can he re-lit and transform a Milan side who currently appear to have lost their competitive appetite? Even his first test, at home to the Norwegian side Rosenborg Trondheim in the Champions League tomorrow night, is not without dangers since he will be without key elements such as the Liberian George Weah, Frenchman



Sacchi... Milan-bound

Is Britain going down the American road towards a lawyer-driven, jackpot-hungry morass of futile complaints of psychological trauma, fuelled by the vague hope that you might persuade a jury to give you a compensation bonanza or at least intimidate the defending party to pay up out of court?

G2 cover story

سكنا من الاجل